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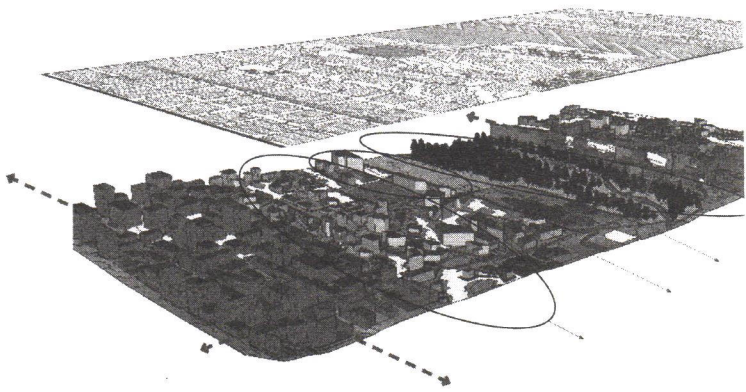
25 YEARS

ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST



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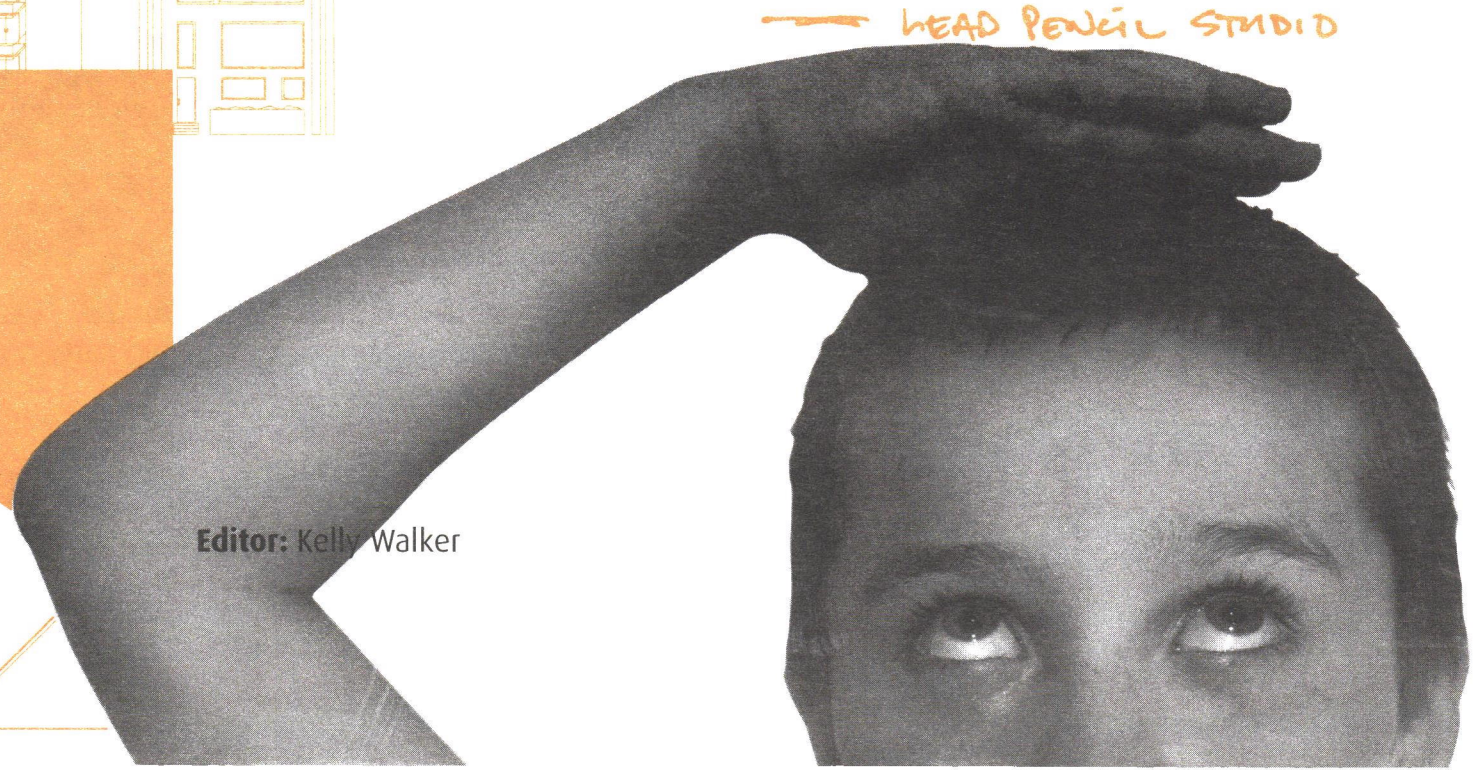
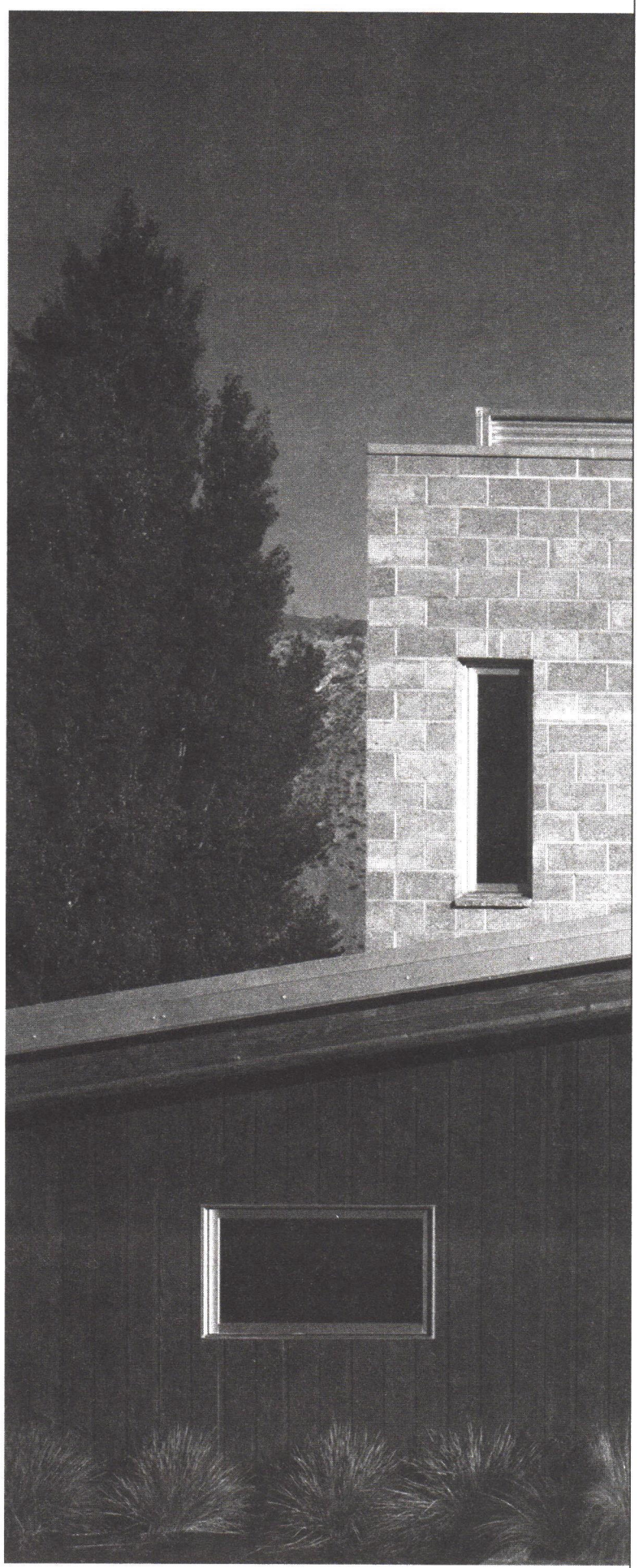


Editor: Kelly Walker



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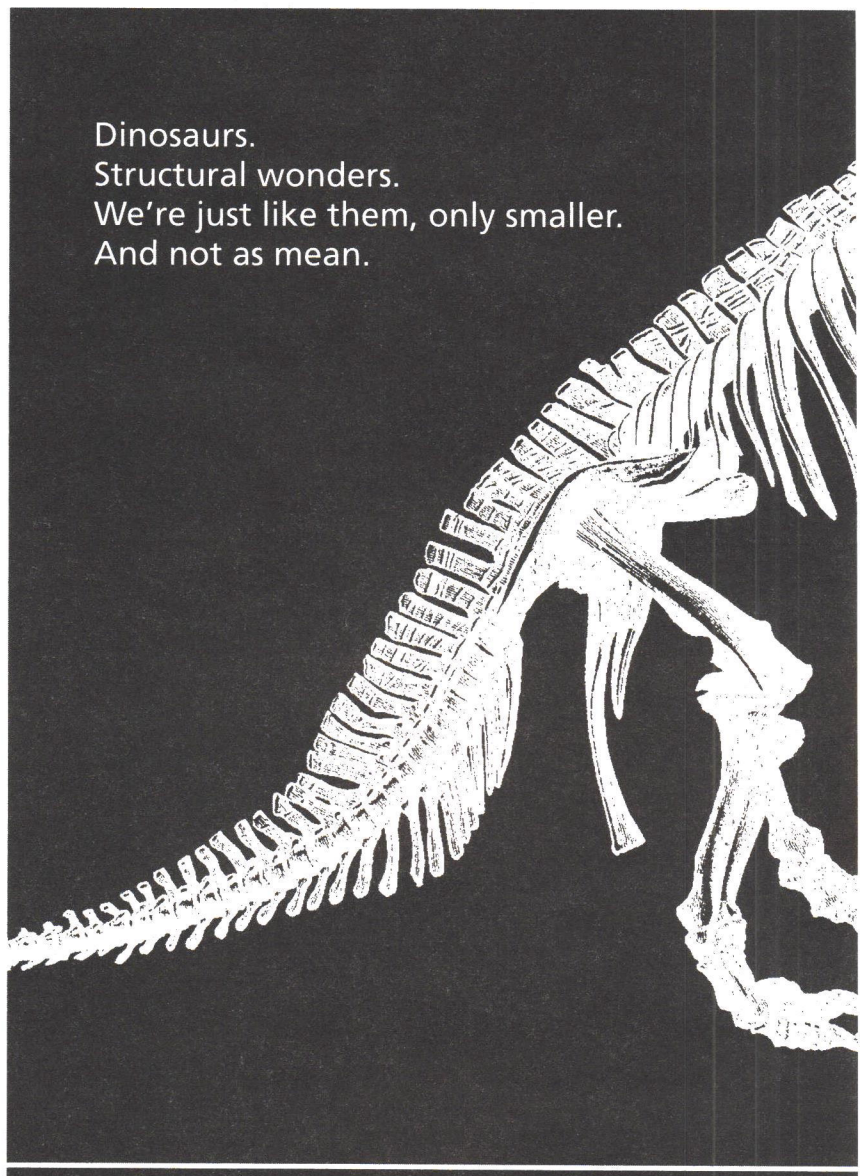

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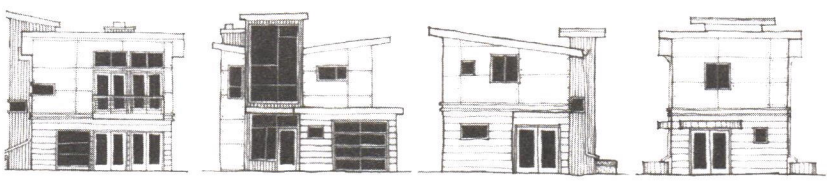

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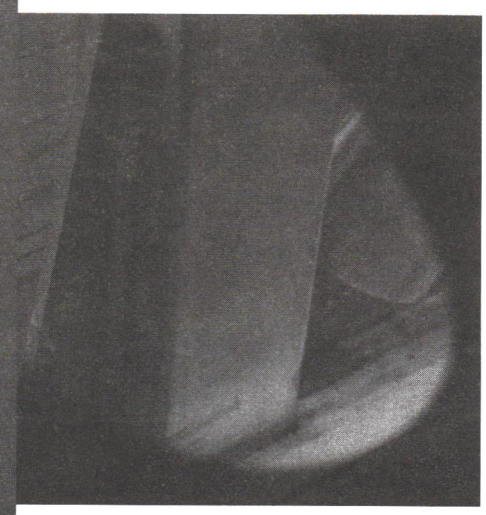

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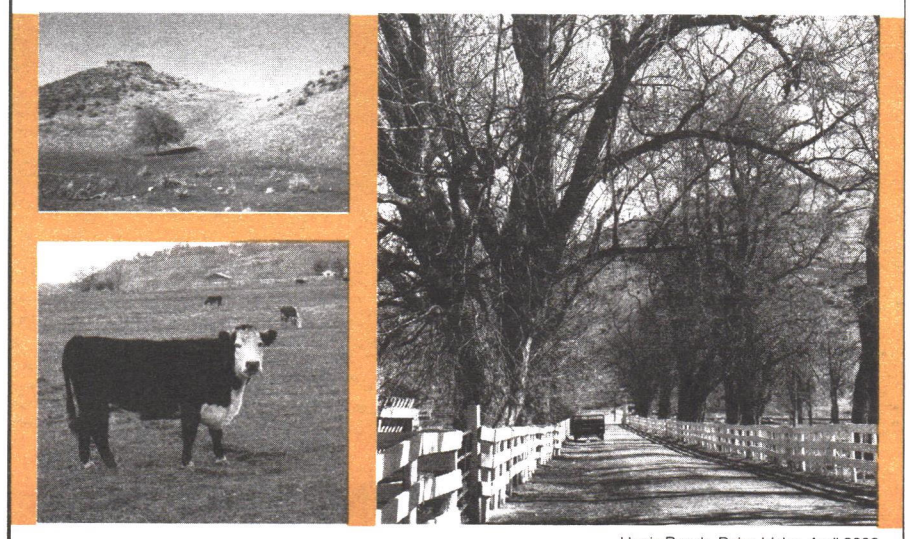

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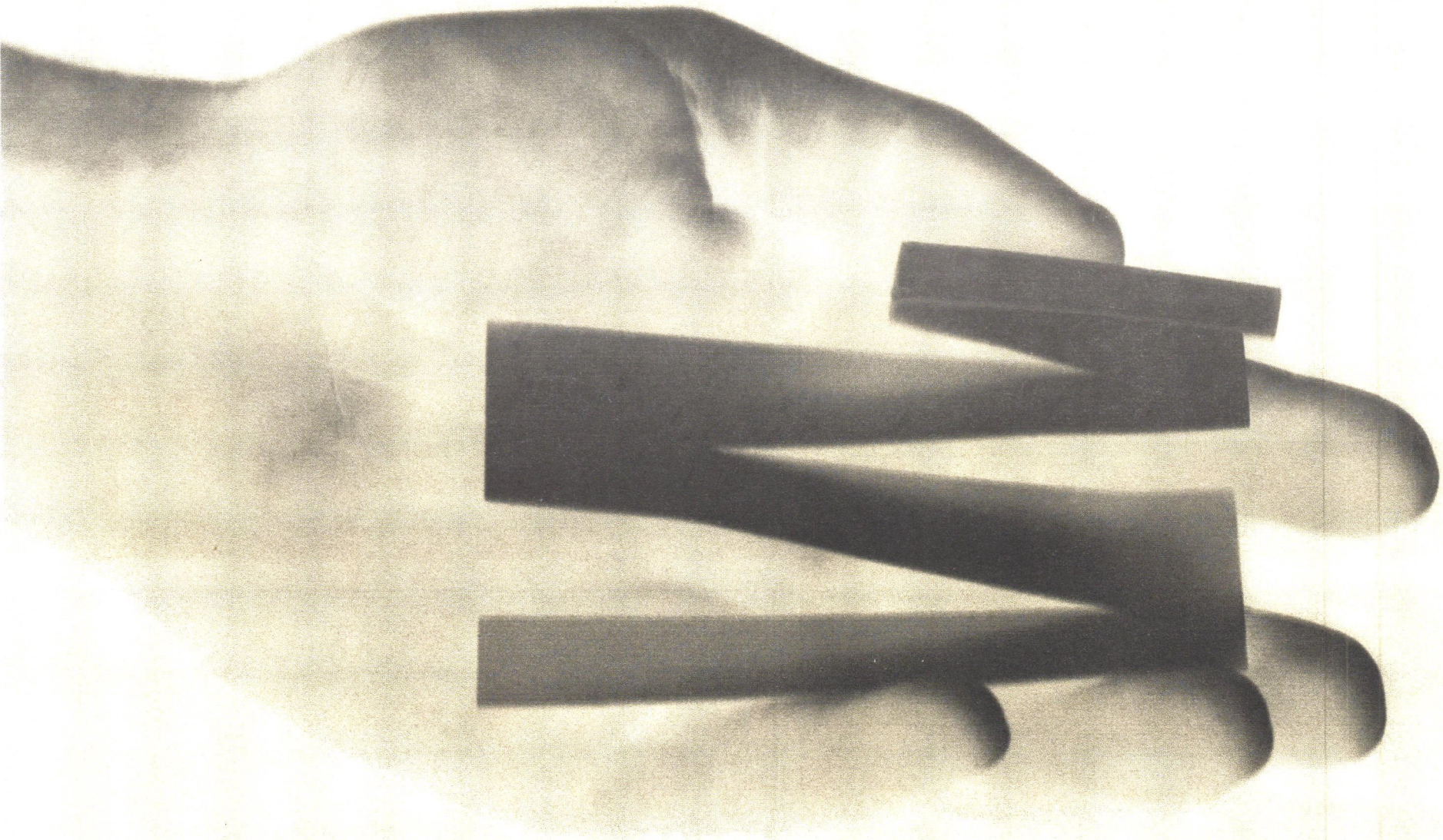

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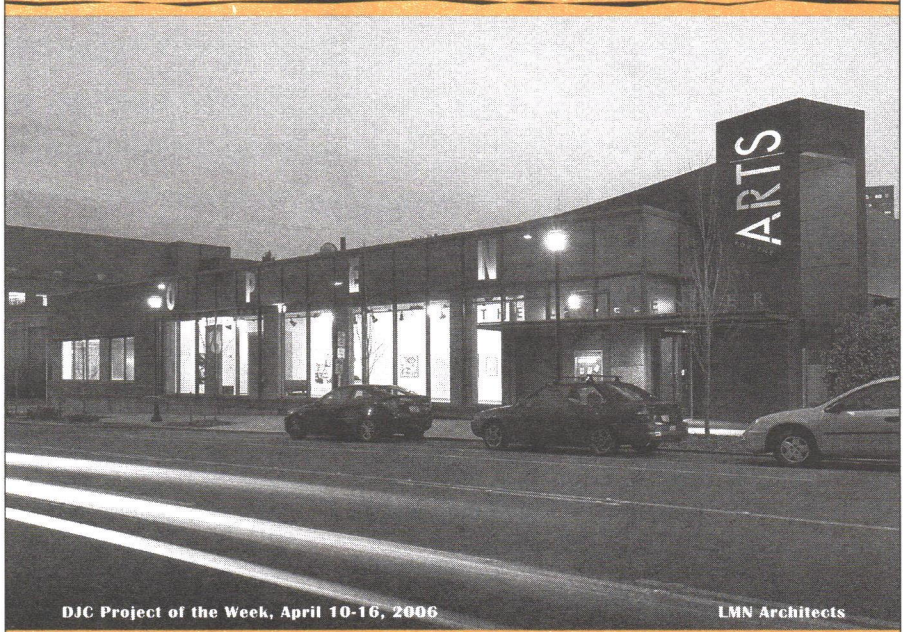

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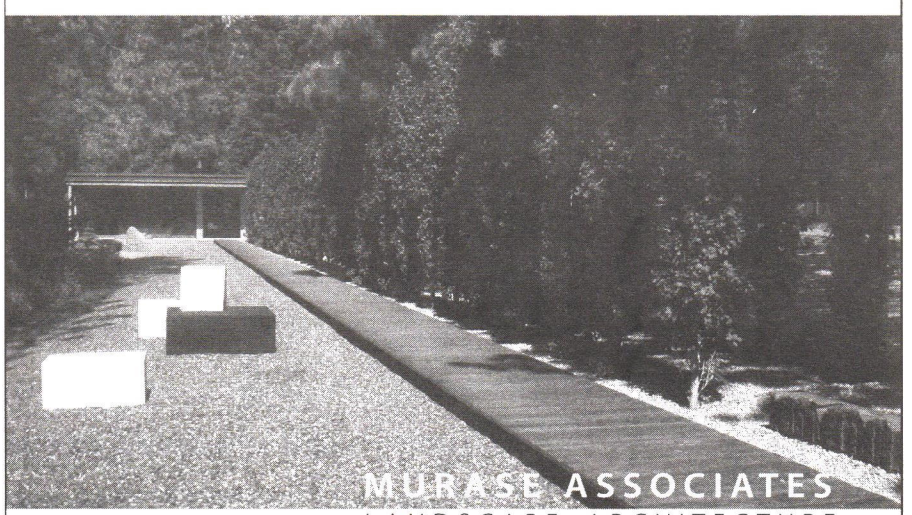

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All opinions expressed are those of the writers. We make every effort to ensure accuracy, but neither ARCADE nor its volunteers or officers of the Northwest Architectural League will be held liable for errors. Editorial content is guided by the Editorial Committee. Ideas for articles may be sent to info@arcadejournal.com. We also invite news, calendar entries of interest to the design community, and suggestions for New Work—all of which may be sent to the editors listed here.

ARCADE
1201 Alaskan Way
Pier 56, Suite 200
Seattle WA 98101-2913
206 971 5596

Volume 25
Number 1
Fall 2006

To advertise in arcade, please contact Diane Converse at 206 971 5596, or diane@arcadejournal.com

Editor
Kelly Walker
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Design Assistants
Pauline Grayson
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Managing Director
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diane@arcadejournal.com
206 971 5596

Administrative Assistant
Erin Kendig

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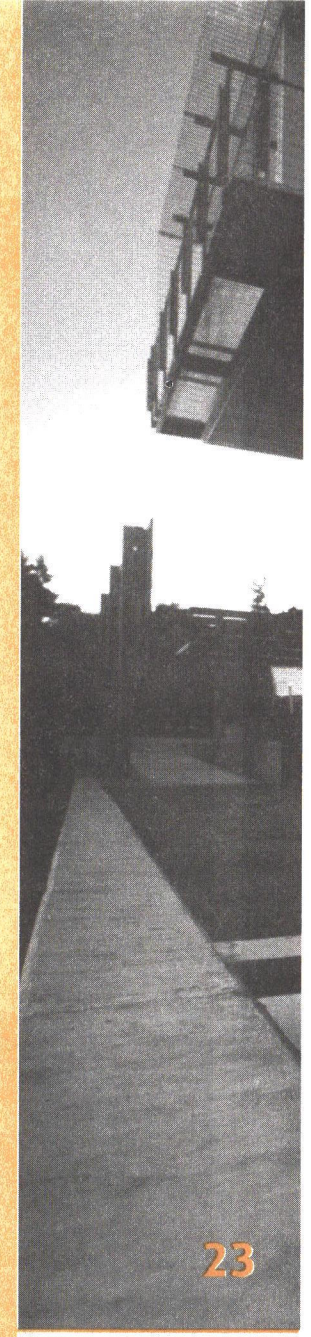

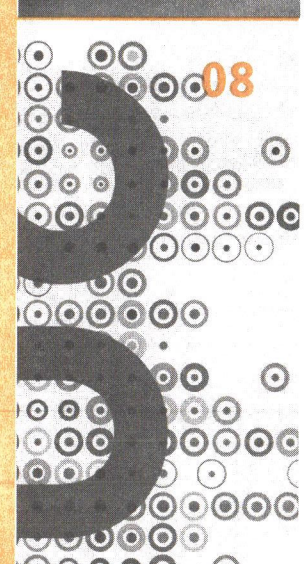

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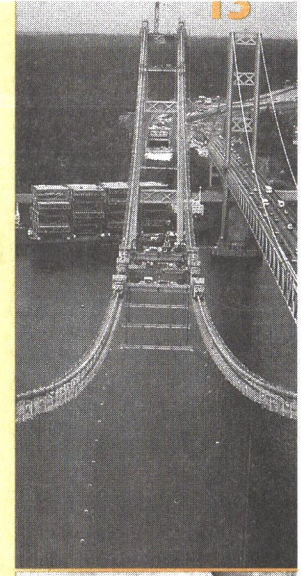

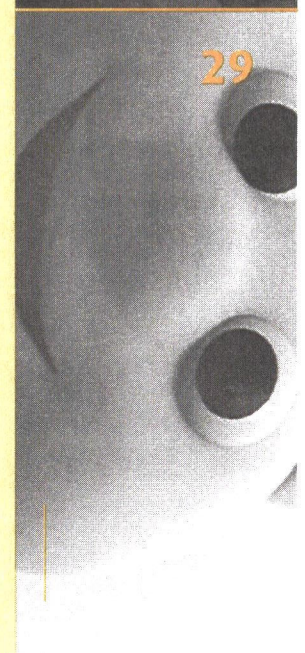

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ARCADE: Brief History...What's Next?

Kelly Walker

From its inception 25 years ago to the present, ARCADE's production has been a labor of love; all content is generated and coordinated by a nearly all volunteer effort. The organization hired its first paid staff person in the summer of 2000, and now has four paid staff members in addition to its volunteer board of trustees and editorial committee.

A brief history...

1981

ARCADE was conceived and published by Catherine Barrett, Susan Boyle, Ann Hirschi and Trina Deines—architecture schoolmates and close friends to this day. They started the magazine because the Northwest didn't have anything like it at the time (or now for that matter), and they wanted to continue the verdant dialogues that were part of their architectural education, including on-going critical inquiry and a passion for visualizing their aggressive creativity. They had no particular frustrations, but simply wanted to give architecture in the Northwest a voice—to continue the conversation they began in school, and galvanize a new one within the design community.

ARCADE 6.3
Graphic Design: Jay Pickering, Gregg Stewart, Robin Truckseiss

1993 to Summer 1996

ARCADE falls away, starts up again...falls away...

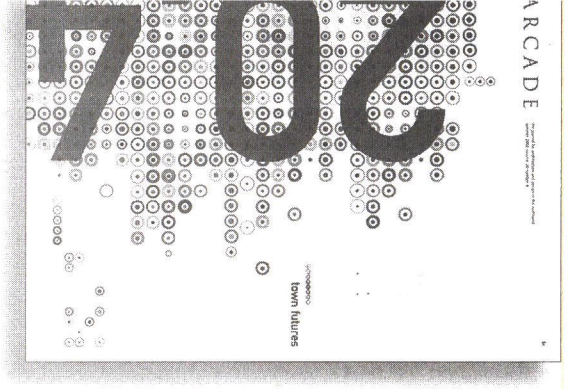
Architecture-and ARCADE-enthusiast Victoria Reed grew tired of opening her mailbox in anticipation of the latest issue only to find the cupboard bare. She investigated the missing magazine only to discover that it had gone into remission due to lack of funds and the sheer exhaustion of its volunteers. Vicki single-handedly set out to revive the publication. She solicited the creative talent of ARCADE's last-known graphic designer, Ted Mader, and the help of others who had previously been involved in developing the content.

ARCADE 11.1
Graphic Design: Tim Girvin Design, Inc.

Fall 1996 to 2001

With Vicki at the editorial helm, ARCADE is reborn in September, 1996, with volume 15, number 1. Vicki commits to publishing the magazine for five years, ending with volume 19, number 4 in June, 2001.

ARCADE 15.1
Graphic Design: TMA, Ted Mader Associates

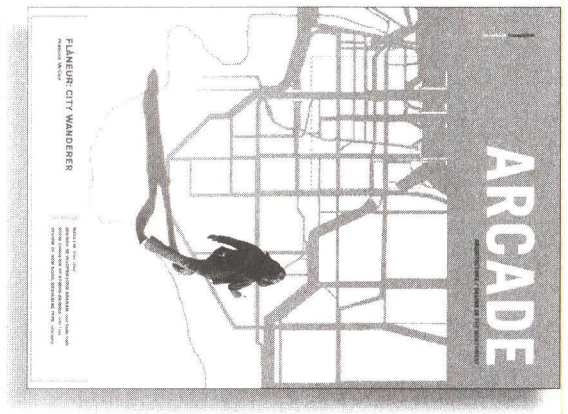


ARCADE 20.4
Graphic Design: Karen Cheng

2001

Me: San Francisco transplant, architecture-educated (B.Arch. + M.Arch.) woman with no intention to practice; harumpf! For my first issue—volume 20, number 1, September 2001—I was fortunate to have the architect and writer John Cava as the feature contributing editor, and the preternaturally talented graphic artist Karen Cheng as the designer of the volume.

Now...



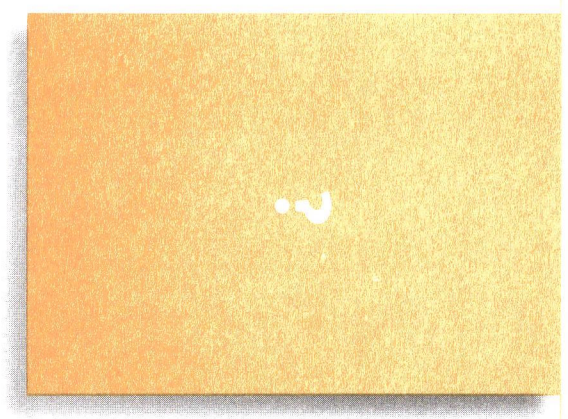
ARCADE 24.4
Graphic Design: EMB Vivid Inc.

2006... Now

ARCADE's Silver Anniversary year.
If the proof weren't in the pudding I'd say that it's entirely inconceivable that a volunteer-run, non-profit magazine could live long enough to celebrate a quarter of a century—let alone have the content focus be architecture and design in the Northwest (the Great Pacific Northwest with its rugged individualism and Patagonia- REI- outdoor sports- and caffeine-inspired mumbo jumbo!). Still, like anything with a life, ARCADE has changed a lot over the years, growing from a handmade, mostly local-focus academic architectural journal, to a popular magazine on design that's distributed throughout the country, and to some destinations in Europe.

the future

When thinking about how to celebrate this anniversary within the pages of ARCADE, we naturally want to acknowledge and thank EVERYONE who has contributed to the making of the magazine over the last 25 years—writers, artists, designers, photographers, politicians, scholars, children, to name a few—but we also want to look ahead to the next 25 years; we hope to at least scratch this surface over the next four issues.



Some highlights from this edition include a perspective on the city of Vancouver from two insiders, Julie Bogdanowicz and James Eidse, who also happen to be 25-ish-years-old. A feature from East-Coast architect transplant and Seattle Design Commission Chair, David Spiker, on a handful of talented young Seattle architects who'd like to tackle public commissions but, due to their perceived lack of experience, are not being entrusted with the projects. A critique of brand characters such as the Pillsbury Doughboy and Jolly Green Giant by the award-winning graphic designer Karen Cheng. And an appreciation of one of the United States' leading industrial and commercial designers, Sara Little Turnbull.

For its next 25 years, ARCADE should take a considerable cue from Turnbull. To quote the recent ICOGRADA international conference (where Sara was honored with a prestigious Achievement Award):

"Turnbull recognizes that being creative is not always welcome in mainstream society. 'You will not always be understood. You may even incite envy and veiled hostility!' All things considered, Turnbull advocates taking risks and challenging assumptions. In her words, everyone should 'pull up the carrot every now and then to see how it's growing.'"

Kelly Walker assumed the role of editor of ARCADE with volume 20, number 1 in September, 2001.

"We all want a sense of meaning in our lives and in our experiences, including the experiences that we buy. Making meaning should be our industry's standard, not usability, not emotional thrills, not status, but a sense that this product or brand was made just for me, that it is so relevant to me that it is part of the story of my life."

Darrel Rhea, at ICOGRADA Design Week

The 4th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art

"Of Mice and Men," curated by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Subotnick, ended on June 5, 2006. The show included works by more than 60 artists in twelve venues that dotted the entire span of Auguststraße in Berlin-Mitte.

Choosing one street as both example and archetype, "Of Mice and Men" led viewers across a variety of environments and experiences. It opened doors into forgotten buildings and hidden sites, dispersing art in spaces where we usually work, eat, pray and play. The artists in "Of Mice and Men" were asked to intervene or present their works in places that represent the everyday: private apartments, offices, schools, galleries, trailers and former factories. At the same time, they were told that they could not alter the spaces in any way.

The resulting work ranged from the highly conceptual "blue chip" by Bruce Nauman to work that seemed like it could have been produced by John Malkovich's students in *Art School Confidential*. However, the spaces were often more interesting than the art, ranging from the Old Garrison Cemetery and Post Office Stables, to the former Jewish School for Girls—a chilling reminder of the Communist era and the Nazi regime before it. In a strange juxtaposition, the photographs of Francesca Woodman, an American artist who committed suicide in 1981 at the age of 23, felt like they could have been made in prewar Berlin.

Berlin has a long tradition of co-opting and

Defining Design on a Changing Planet

Seattle ICOGRADA
Design Week, 9-15 July, 2006

The International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA) Design Week is an international forum for discussion about the role of design in the face of a rapidly changing world. It explores how designers can contribute to a healthy world economy while being mindful of the cultural, environmental and political impact of design. This year's event in Seattle was the first US-based ICOGRADA Design Week.

ICOGRADA was founded in 1963 as the world body for professional design communication. It is a voluntary assembly of associations concerned with graphic design, visual communication, design management, design promotion and education. This year's event in Seattle was the first US-based ICOGRADA Design Week and the first time the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) has partnered in an international conference—this first one via their Center for Cross-Cultural Design. The AIGA established the Center to foster more effective communication across cultures, and to better understand the interwoven experience of design and culture in our lives.

The conference stressed the need for the design community to join forces toward a collaborative and critical voice. Accordingly, the event provided access to an incredible cross-section of the international design community: people, perspectives, ideas and inspiration.

A few of the many conference speakers included Darrel Rhea, CEO at

Oregon, Ho!

Road trips may have taken on an unpleasant tarnish of late, with all the gas guzzling and climate warming involved, but every now and again you've just got to get out of town and do something out of the ordinary. Let us share an idea for September's stress release: a temporary structure on the Columbia River concocted by Lead Pencil Studio (Annie Han + Daniel Mihalyo).

Maryhill Double, a site-specific installation, sits on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, directly across from the Maryhill Museum in south-central Washington. It reflects the museum in size and shape, but is built of scaffolding and construction netting. The installation, erected on private ranchland, is accessible only on certain Sundays through October 1, 2006. Maryhill Double is a 90-minute drive east of Portland.

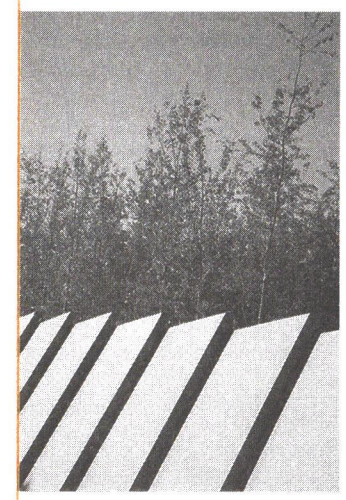
Open noon to dusk
September 10, 17 and 24, and October 1.

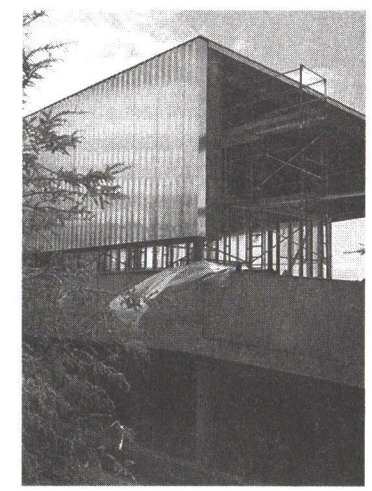
Visit www.disjecta.org for directions and additional information.

Kelly Igoe

For more on Lead Pencil Studio check out David Spiker's feature in this issue: New Talent: The Next Public Generation.

Hang on to your Giant Metal Abstractions!





Olympic Sculpture Park under construction, Seattle, WA, July, 2006. photo: Lara Swimmer

Art lovers and urban green-space junkies, your ship is about to come in. SAM's behemoth outdoor undertaking has been chugging along near the horizon line for months now. With each passing day the waterfront parcel looks more and more like an economically depressed post-war zone, replete with soaring concrete bunkers and waylaid bulldozers. But on October 28, 2006, SAM's much-touted Olympic Sculpture Park will open to the wandering, gawking public.

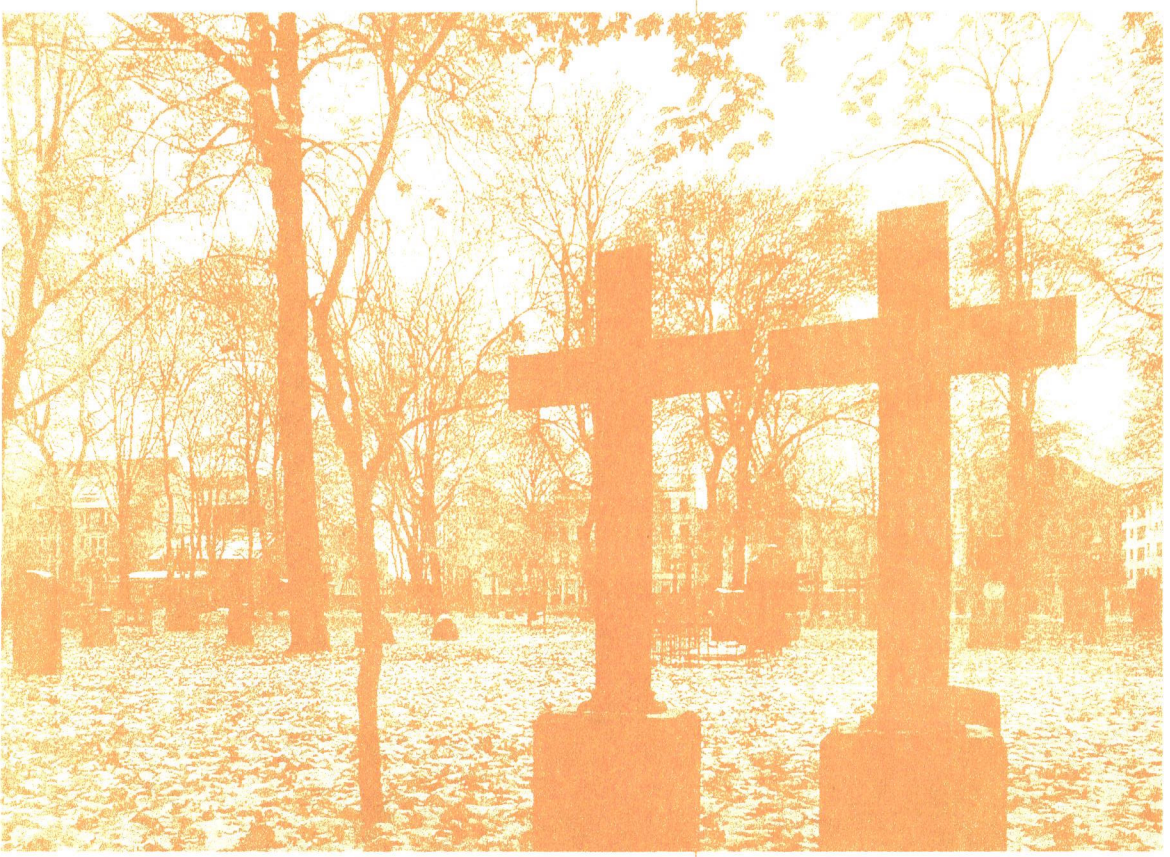
One imagines that in the intervening time between this writing and late October, the park's jarring topography will have been smoothed over by grass, shrubs, elbow-joint pathways and the all-impor

photos: courtesy of 4th berlin biennial for contemporary art

gallery or opens an independent exhibition space. The curators capitalized on the specificity of Berlin's art scene and its vast quantities of unoccupied space. Yet that space is both a blessing and a curse: it offers up exciting and fresh venues for presenting art, however, it also symbolizes the consequences of history in a city built on powerful and persistent memory.

The Berlin Biennial is the only biennial in the world that changes locations and venues according to the exigencies of the exhibition. This year its context within the heart of the city brought with it the undeniable weight of countless histories and manifestations, triumphs and failures. "Of Mice And Men" became a strange carnival or street fair, following a jagged descent into the spirals of time.

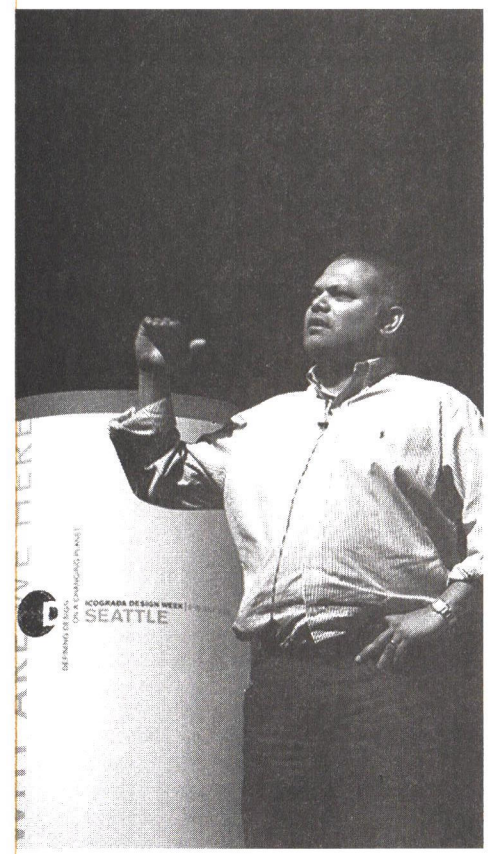
Ellen Sollod



photos: courtesy of 4th berlin biennial for contemporary art

spoke on Making Meaning by Design. Sanja Rocco of Croatia, graphic designer and art director at Rocco & Partner (www.roccoipartner.hr/indexEN.htm)—Sanja presented The Role of Design: from Socialism to Capitalism. And Ravi Naidoo of South Africa, founder of the Design Indaba (www.designindaba.com), one of the leading creative platforms in the world—Naidoo spoke about the current dynamic design climate in his native country. The ICOGRADA Achievement Award went to Sara Little Turnbull, Director of the Process of Change, Innovation and Design Laboratory at Stanford University (for more on Turnbull's award, see page 18 of this issue).

Seattle ICOGRADA Design Week 9-15 July, 2006

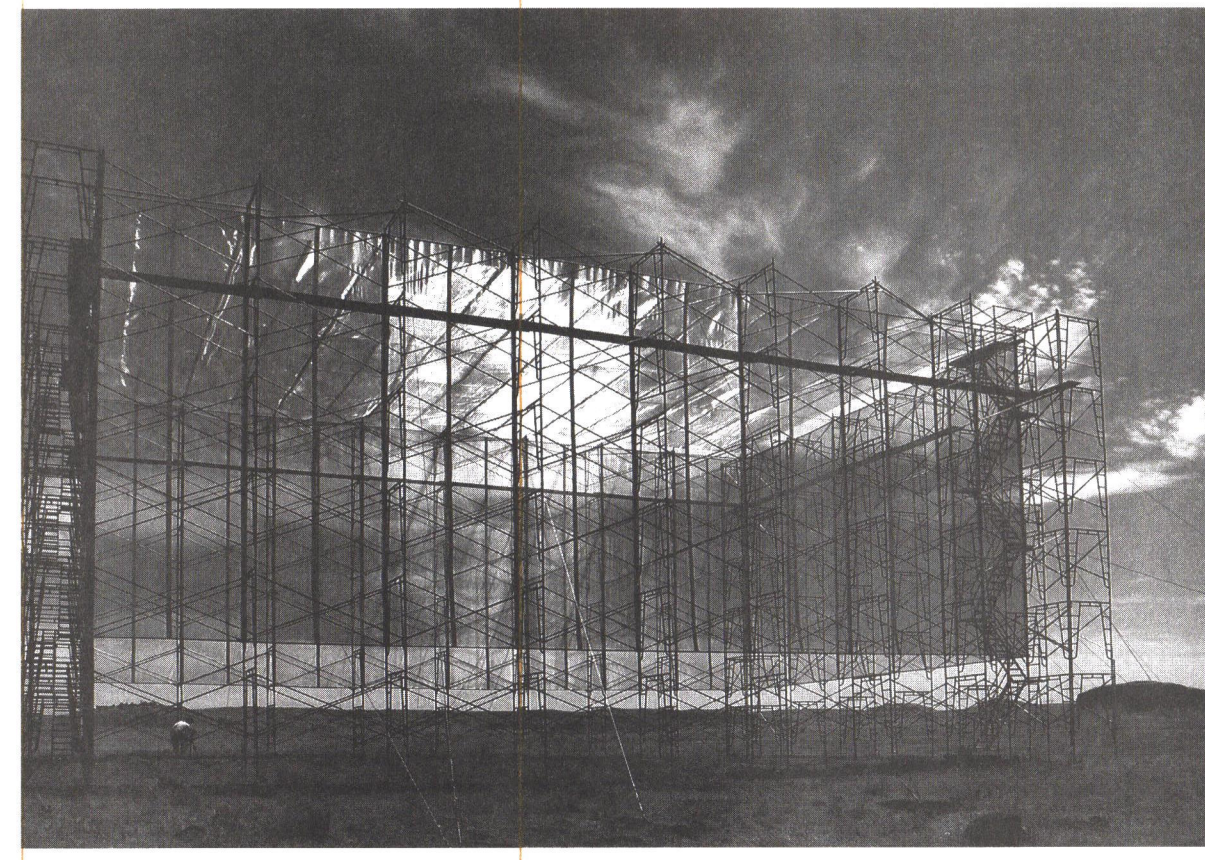


Ravi Naidoo from South Africa was one of the speakers during the international conference. photo:Stuart Alden

through of the park included in SAM press kits, this is highly likely. In fact, dramatic topography and fractured terrain seem as exciting an element in this scheme as the sculptures, views and civic-mindedness it is being built to celebrate.

Artists represented in the park include Alexander Calder, Richard Serra, Beverly Pepper, Tony Smith, Mark di Suvero, Stephen Murphy and Louise Bourgeois—most of them American, and most of the work quite recent, dating from 1967 to 2004.

Kelly Igoe



Maryhill Double, site-specific installation by Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo. photo: Lead Pencil Studio

University of Alaska Fairbanks
Museum of the North, Rose Berry Gallery
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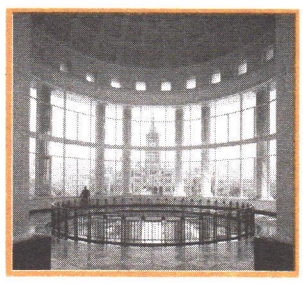

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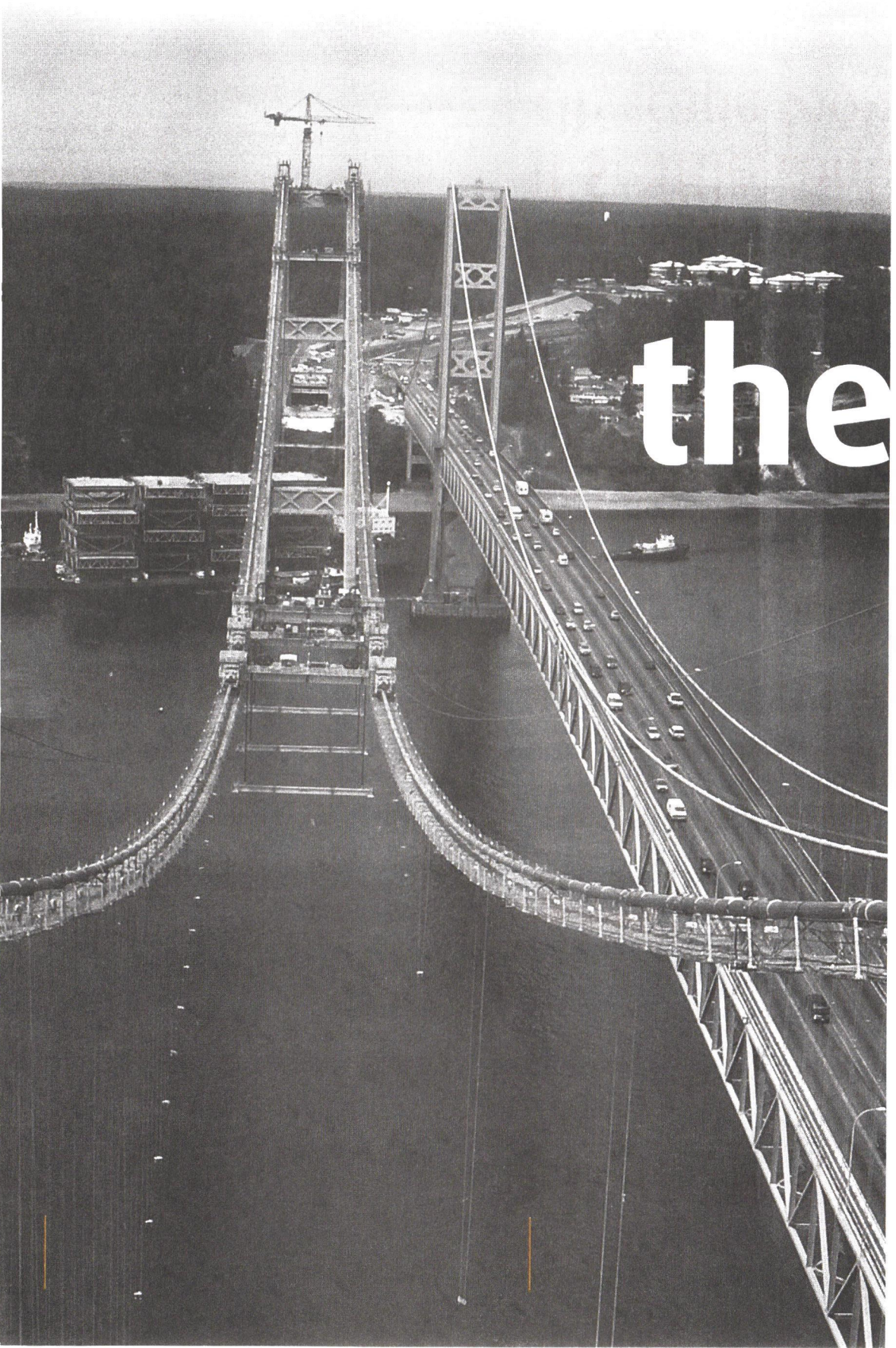


The Narrows Bridge, #2

Don Ewing

Obstacles to travel around here are often large waterways or fast flowing rivers, and crossings are typically bridges. An example is a plank across a ditch. And not to belittle modern bridges, but they are simple and uncomplicated in the universe of things that are built in the world.

the last big bridge

I have been traveling Washington State Highway 16 for several years, now, and have watched the steady construction of the second Tacoma Narrows bridge. I notice an upwelling of joy and excitement each time I reach the point in the road that reveals incremental changes made since my last trip. To my eyes, there is nothing short of nature that compares to large civil works underway. The second Narrows bridge is one of the quietest, least controversial large transportation projects in the region in many years. It has a primal drama that seems to cheat many other projects of their due, because so much of the work is in plain sight, so large, and so understandable to the average person. Bridges are often easy to decode structurally for people; you can feel the forces in your gut. You can see how the pieces work together, becoming a useful union. There are no glue-on decorations, intellectual gimmicks or ruses tweaking our perception of the structure—it just stands there as an elemental piece.

photo: courtesy of Washington State Department of Transportation

The new bridge has towers of cast-in-place concrete, maybe addressing the commodity prices at the time of design. (It's likely just easier than in 1938 to build them with concrete.) China, with its whirlwind growth, touched everything made of anything for a while (although its manufacturing economy is changing so rapidly that it is on target to produce a 116-million-ton steel surplus in 2006). South Korea's Samsung (need a fan? need a phone? need a bridge?) built the road deck sections, brought to Tacoma on a Dutch semi-submersible transport ship. The Dutch are very accomplished with big things that float, travel, help to make and/or carry other big things. The suspension cables were built of wire from Japan and Korea, and were spun in place for this classic suspension bridge, one of only two of its kind in the US for 40 years (a tip of the hat to the old bridge).

The construction/engineering team is strikingly home grown, a joint venture of Kiewit Pacific and Bechtel Infrastructure. These are organizations long involved with big stuff around the world. Parsons did design work for the bridge.

Public works contracting has seen big changes in the last twenty years. Builders are now frequently asked to add financing, maintenance, operation, owner training and other obligations to the basic construction. The contract for the new bridge is a fixed sum, out of step with this current trend. The contract does include the bridge design as well as its construction. Lump sum contracts impose simple and straightforward obligations on the parties and have many courtroom tests. The contract amount (excluding the toll collection system) comes to $615 million, not large in an age where everything transport-related seems to be quoted in billions. (Although the Hood Canal bridge replacement is currently at $292 million.)

Sure, there's plenty of opportunity for a builder's bad day, but this bridge looks like barrels of fun. They even strung it with Christmas lights during the holiday cable spinning period. There are longer, higher, more difficult and more technologically modern bridges in the world, but this one is ours. The project has about one more year to run, so see the progress if you can, because this is probably the last big bridge around here for our lifetimes. People tend to take the constructed environment for granted, and this is a chance to see a rare process close-up. We get to drive by at really close range—which is very unusual when it comes to bridge building.

Don Ewing was born at Madigan General Hospital in Tacoma. After making too many trips to count over the old Narrows bridge, he looks forward to many more over the new. He has operated Albion Group,llc. a general contracting firm in Seattle, for 24 years.

Local Focus

Designing Seattle's Green Network for the Next Century

Nancy Rottle and Brice Maryman

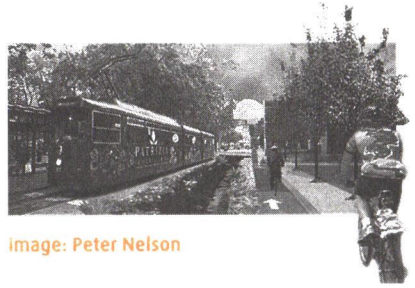


image: Peter Nelson

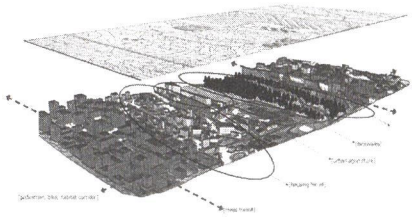


image: Noelle Higgens and Sara Robertson

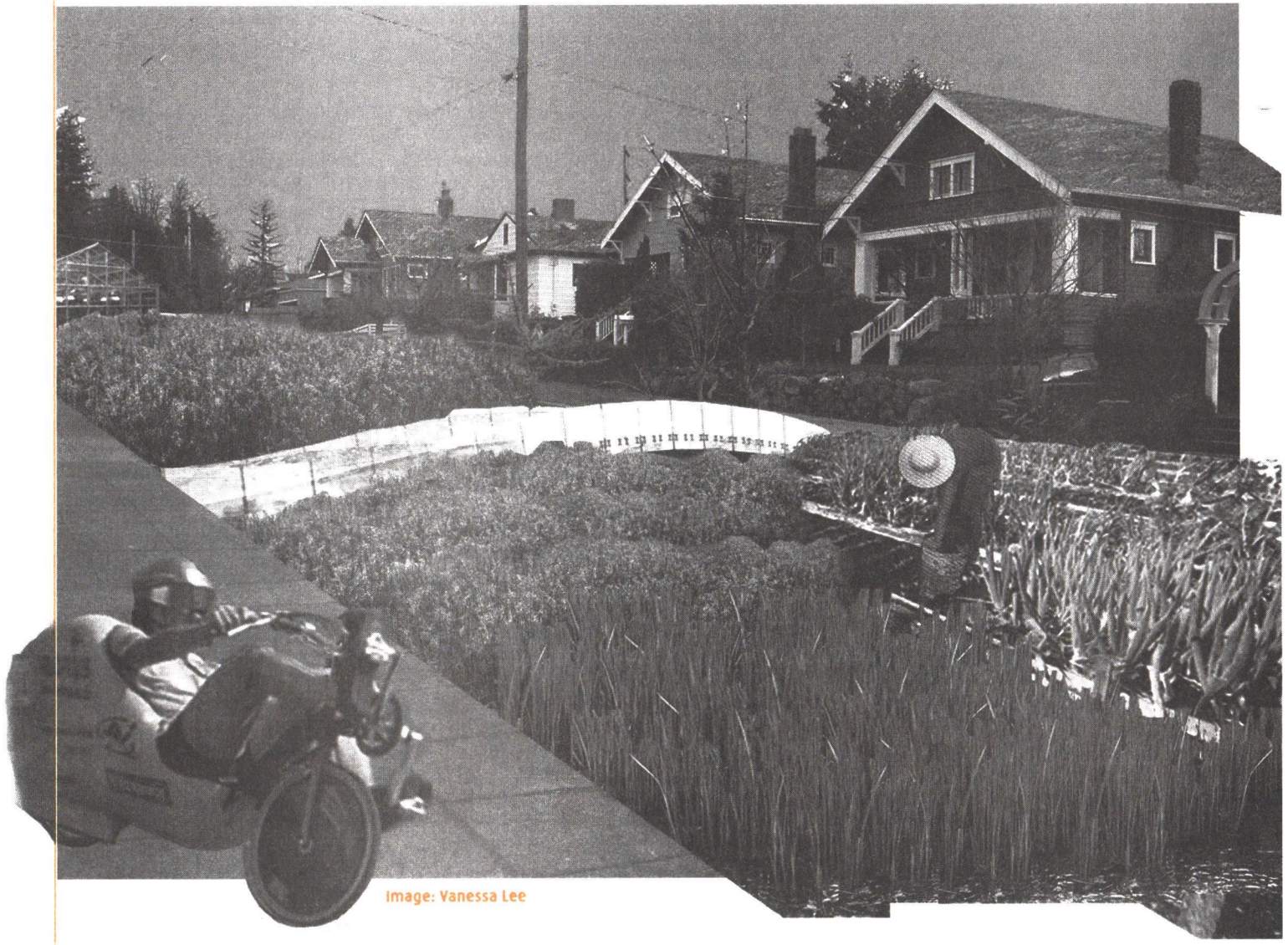


image: Vanessa Lee

If Seattle continues to go "green," what might our cityscape look like in 100 years?

Will we still use an automobile-oriented street grid? Will our densified neighborhoods have adequate space for social encounters, play and participation in civic life? Will our streams and urban shorelines be in better condition or will they still lie under the tyranny of too much

ners, students and activists participated in the Green Futures Charrette to envision, watershed by urban watershed, how we can creatively accommodate another half million people within the city limits—thereby saving rural farm and forestlands from becoming sprawling subdivisions while creating a city knit together by civic and ecological public space. Building on the Olmsted Plan of a century ago, 23 teams each tackled a portion of the city, basing their work upon design principles developed by the Open Space Seattle 2100 coalition that have since been endorsed by all nine City Council members.

Charrette proposals included a new saltwater lagoon where a shallow earthquake faultline runs though SODO; vast new swaths of greenspace above a lidded Interstate 5; reclamation of public shorelines as Puget Sound waters rise in response to global climate change; and model, self-sustaining eco-villages that supply their own energy, food and waste-water treatment. Taken together, collated visions for each of the joined planning areas draw raw, but enlightening, 20-year and 100-year roadmaps for the city's "green infrastructure."

Responses to particular watershed and neighborhood conditions were unique, but consistent patterns outline a framework of green urbanism policies that point us toward civic action. Sixteen thematic strategies (see sidebar) fall under four big connected "green infrastructure" that supports urban functions without damaging the atmosphere or downstream waters; bikeways, green freeways, natural drainage filtration and tree canopy cover are all part of that system. Second, plan for density and community, by focusing development into urban nodes that contain civic spaces, local identities, walkable amenities and abundant public transit. Third, strive for ecological open spaces, in both public and private realms, that restore ecological functions and promote biodiversity on land and in our waters. Growing connected urban forests, restoring streams and shorelines, and reclaiming earthquake and hazard zones as greenbelts are examples. Finally, provide democratic access to open space, so that all people, in all neighborhoods, can reap the benefits of a multi-faceted open space system.

The work of the Open Space Seattle 2100 coalition has tilled the soil; now citizens are challenging the City to plant the seeds for a new green infrastructure system. A broad constituency has requested that the City take the next steps, by contracting consultants to work with the city and its neighborhoods to refine and vet the 100-year visioning started by the charrette participants. We've also encouraged the Mayor to form a Green Infrastructure Task Force to identify how our sometimes-myopic public works goals might be leveraged to create more exciting, beneficial and beautiful projects that serve multiple functions and reap multiple benefits. (For example, why repave our streets without simultaneously mitigating the polluted water that flows from those same roadways into our lakes, rivers and Sound?)

We are at a critical time in our city's future. Climate change, increased density, shifting transportation modes and a crashing ecology in Puget Sound all suggest we need to change our limited approach to public space. With the Pro-Parks Levy expiring in 2008, there is an opportunity pushing instead for a Green Infrastructure Levy that weaves together bikeways, shoreline restoration, civic space, parks and innovative ecological street design. If Seattle is to be a paragon of urban green, then we must invest boldly and with an inspired vision of how good we can become.

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks go to all of the 300-plus charrette participants who gave two days (and more) of their time, and to our supporters in the City, non-profit and design worlds. Praise also goes to the landscape architecture and urban planning students who supported and co-led their charrette teams, digitized their teams' plans in GIS, and further pushed and illustrated design ideas after the charrette.

You can download plans and designs for each of the 18 planning areas, as well as resources developed for the charrette at: www.open2100.org.

Nancy Rottle is a landscape architect and an assistant professor in the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Washington. Brice Maryman is a landscape and urban designer with Charles Anderson Landscape Architecture. Together, they directed Open Space Seattle 2100, a UW community collaboration to create a 100-year plan for Seattle's open spaces.

Green Urbanism Strategies from the Green Futures Charrette

1 Create an Integrated, Connected Green Infrastructure

- Aggregate Open Space to Create Connections and Urban Greenways
- Create Multi-functional Open Space, making the most of limited urban lands
- Redefine Transportation Corridors to include more green spaces and ecosystem functions in the rights-of-way, and ease low-impact transportation modes. Lid the freeways!
- Recreate Natural Drainage to Restore our Waters, using pervious surfaces, raingardens, restored wetlands and bioswales to clean and detain water before entering streams, lakes and Puget Sound

2 Plan for Density and Community

- Develop New Urban Villages with Civic Hearts
- Use Green Roofs and Walls
- Encourage Decentralized Self-sufficiency through localized power generation, wastewater treatment and urban agriculture

3 Strive for Ecological Open Space

- Understand the City as Watersheds
- Respect Underlying Natural Conditions such as earthquake fault zones, steep slopes and wetlands
- Re-establish Historic Streams that are now buried in pipes
- Restore Shorelines for Habitat, so that salmon can safely find their way into the Green and Cedar River drainages
- Protect and Acquire Greenbelts and Connected Habitat Networks

4 Provide Democratic Access and Use

- Ensure Equality in Accessibility
- Increase Access to Water
- Use Open Space for Education and Schools for Open Space
- Plan a Hierarchy and Variety of Open Spaces

Which Future Should We Choose for Seattle's Downtown Waterfront?

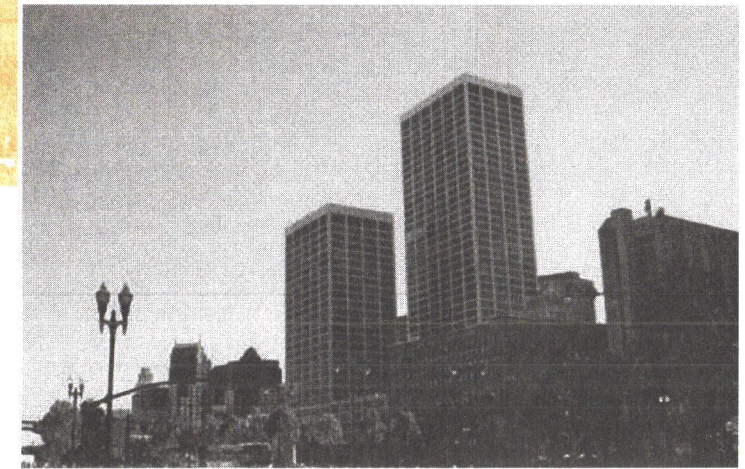
Nic Rossouw

The Nisqually Earthquake of 2001 has provided Seattle with an incredible opportunity to correct possibly the greatest urban design mistake in our civic history. Building the Alaskan Way Viaduct was an error the first time around and replacing it now would be sheer lunacy. The Nisqually Earthquake of 2001 has provided Seattle with an incredible opportunity to correct possibly the greatest urban design mistake in our civic history.

Running an elevated freeway along Seattle's downtown waterfront is a gesture that says moving cars through the city as fast as possible is more important than the quality of life of those living and working in the city. The reasons to care about the quality of the urban environment are so clear to us now that it would be un-forgivable to repeat what we did in the 1950s. Creating a denser more livable downtown is critical to reducing urban sprawl, air and water pollution, and even slowing global-warming. Visiting the central waterfront should be a wonderful experience, but instead it is an assault by overwhelming vehicle noise and exhaust fumes.

In the 1950s freeways were seen as a way to improve our lives and they were built through and around many of our cities. Seattle was fortunate that citizens rebelled against running a freeway through the Arboretum and along the shore of Lake Washington yet, sadly both I-5 and the Alaskan Way Viaduct were constructed. As with baseball diamonds in the middle of cornfields, if you build it they will come, and the Viaduct has become so heavily used that many people think it unimaginable to live without this highway.
We have allowed engineers focused on auto efficiency to direct our most important urban design decisions for almost a century as we destroyed an extensive streetcar system, made roads more dangerous for cyclists and built urban highways. It is time to take back our city from the car. Great cities are built around pedestrians not drivers.

I think that the real question is not whether we re-build the Viaduct or build a tunnel; it is whether we build a tunnel or a surface boulevard. While the tunnel solution initially appears to be much gentler on the central waterfront than an overhead structure, I think it needs much closer scrutiny before we invest over $4 billion in this particular future for our city. The tunnel solution is as auto-centric as the elevated highway. It is a solution that encourages the use of cars and does nothing to increase the availability or use of mass transit.
The tunnel does bury cars for a portion of downtown, allowing for an improved waterfront, but there are two massive portals where the highway transitions from the surface to underground. The proposed south portal is in an area that is mostly industrial currently, but it is the natural long-term extension for housing and commerce from Pioneer Square to the south waterfront. The proposed north portal is frankly an abomination. The roadway rises sharply from below the waterfront to meet the entrance to the Battery Street Tunnel. While Victor Steinbreuck Park has wonderful views today, the noise and air quality are terrible. The steeper grade required by the tunnel solution will increase, not decrease, vehicle and roadway noise. The WSDOT and SDOT highway designers have attempted to create a partial lid in front of the Market and Steinbreuck Park, but it will be at great cost to limited effect.



Alaskan Way Viaduct, Seattle, WA

I would encourage the city leaders and citizens to hold firm against blackmail by the state. This is our city and we should not be forced to build a highway along our waterfront. The state is demanding that vehicle capacity be maintained or expanded in this corridor. I disagree; we need to improve the mobility of people and the quality of life in our city, not protect the right of people to drive at high speed along the waterfront. The solution to the 100,000-plus cars per day is not to enshrine that number of vehicles at that location, but to provide effective choices for people to get where they need to go. We can do this and create a wonderful city for the next 100-plus years by building an appropriately scaled boulevard along the waterfront that connects to the city street grid. This should be combined with improvements to the West Seattle Bridge connection to I-5, modifications to I-5 through downtown, improvements to the major avenues through downtown, improved mass transit (buses, light rail, streetcars) and improved bicycle routes through downtown. When this is done people will shift modes, change routes and discover that getting out of highway traffic will make their lives better. People are adaptable and we need to take advantage of that to create the city we want.

The common response to this proposal is that freight from the Port, SODO, Georgetown and Interbay will be unable to move. This is where the Viaduct becomes part of the solution. I am talking about the Spokane Street Viaduct. The city is in the process of expanding it and changing its connections to the street grid and the port, so that freight can still flow during the extended construction period that is envisioned for the Alaskan Way Viaduct project. The remaking of Mercer Street at the other end of downtown will allow for freight to connect back to the industrial area in Interbay and to Ballard.

I would like to appeal to all the leaders and citizens of Seattle to take seriously Mayor Nickels' much touted urban Kyoto Protocol. If we are going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our city we need to limit, not increase, car trips. Rebuilding a highway along the downtown waterfront flies completely in the face of that goal. Seattle is blessed with an amazing natural setting and we have an opportunity of a community lifetime to build an incredible downtown waterfront.
As long as we see the Viaduct replacement as a highway project we will not be able to create a true "front porch" for the city, where people can live, work, stroll, play and eat by the Puget Sound.

Nic Rossouw is a founding partner and engineer at the structural design firm Swanson Sze Faget in Seattle. He was born and grew up in the transit-challenged city of Johannesburg, South Africa, before moving to the even more transit-challenged city of Albuquerque, New Mexico, before moving to Seattle in 1985. He has served on the Seattle Design Commission since 2002. Nic is hoping to live long enough to see real mass transit in Seattle.

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Sara Little Turnbull

Kelly Walker

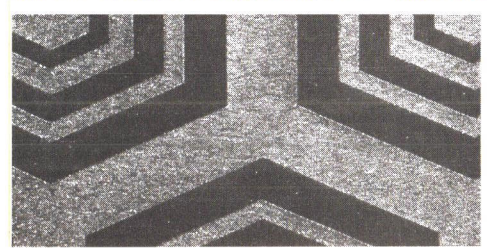
I met Sara Little Turnbull at a party in early June; we both wore black, though she topped hers with a bright magenta béret. As the party buzzed around us, we talked about how lovely it was to be there, about design and about life. I was honored to be in the company of one of the country's leading industrial and commercial designers.

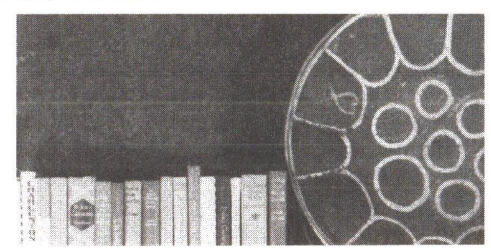
The next time I saw Sara was a little more than a month later at the ICOGRADA Achievement Award presentation. Sara received this international organization's highest recognition for her many wide-ranging contributions to communication design over her long and rich career. A videotaped interview served as her introduction to the lucky few who showed up for the award presentation. Among other professional pursuits, Sara has served as the Director of the Process of Change, Innovation and Design Laboratory at Stanford. She spoke passionately about her work, the impact of culture on design, the importance of creativity and curiosity in the design process, and the imperative that one must put out as much as she takes in. When the credits began to roll, the auditorium erupted with applause and the audience stood, unable to contain their appreciation. Sara walked onto the stage—diminutive in stature at just under five-feet, yet with a larger than life presence for her achievements, elegance and grace.

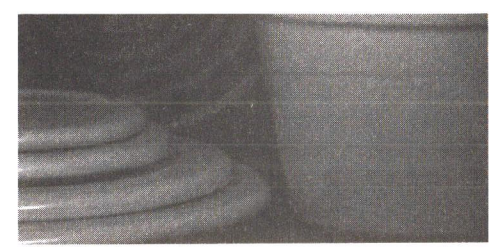
That night at the ICOGRADA Design Week's closing party on Seattle's central waterfront I met Sara again. Despite the lingering heat of the day and setting sun, Sara was once again in all black save for her signature *chapeau*. As she sat and took in the scene, I kneeled beside her and once again, as the party buzzed around us, we talked about life and design. Unwavering in her gaze, she smiled, looked me in the eye and challenged me to challenge myself. To think of space differently. To think about design differently. To find a new perspective. I'm going to try not to let her down.

Kelly Walker is the editor of *ARCADE*.

Sara Little Turnbull in Lizhang, China, 1997. © Maureen Hoffman, Künstdame, 1997.







All objects from Sara Little Turnbull's collection at the Center for Design Research. Images courtesy of Sara

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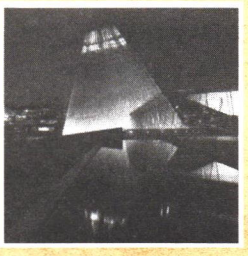

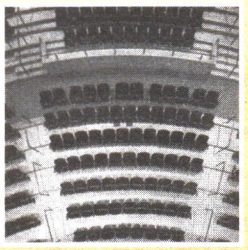

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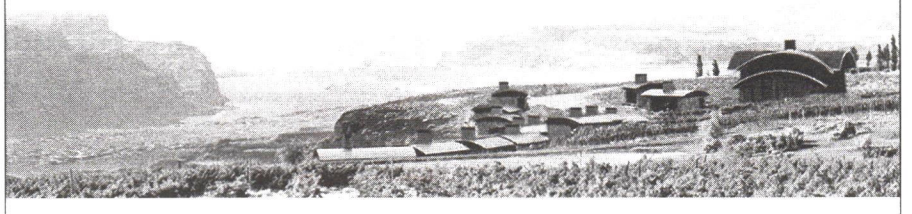
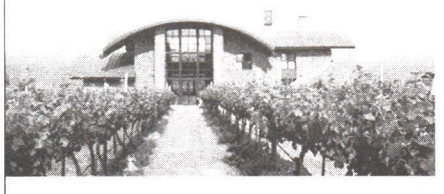

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After Seattle: John and Patricia Patkau's Grande Bibliotheque du Quebec

Trevor Boddy

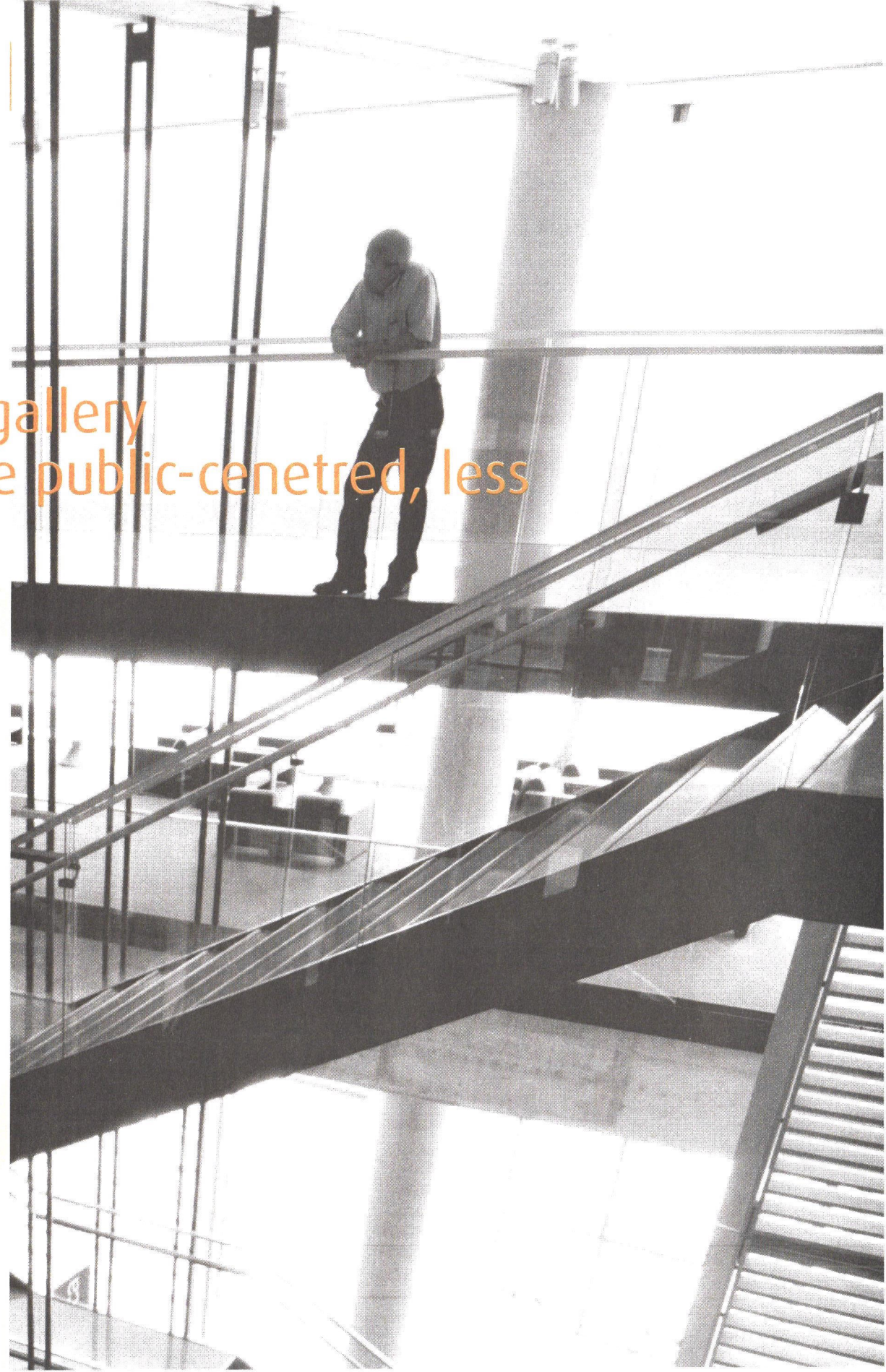
"These days, architects are desperate for art gallery commissions—but libraries are a richer, more public-cenetred, less elitist building type." John Patkau, Co-designer, Grande bibliothèque du Québec

I find myself agreeing with both ends of Vancouver architect John Patkau's assessment. Architectural culture generally, and we architecture critics specifically, have over-published and over-praised art galleries over the past decade or two. The "Bilbao Effect" has become bilious, and I, for one, will be quite happy if I never again hear mock-sculptural, self-conscious halls for contemporary art referred to as "the new cathedrals."

It seems just as evident to me that the building that will come to emblemize the beginning of a new century of public architecture is not the latest kunsthalle by Hadid, Holl or Herzog, but rather Rem Koolhaas' Seattle Central Public Library. As Patkau suggests, the library—especially the North American public lending library—is a particularly populist building type in that it uniquely serves all classes, ages and education levels. The Seattle building fulfills most of its library functions admirably; but it is trailblazing in its take on public space, and through this, the idea of public architecture it presents. Within its zig-zag shell, Koolhaas' library proposes a range of public spaces that hilly, jammed-out downtown Seattle never got around to

The Montreal library is the most important North American mega-library to open to the public since Seattle. An island of seven million francophones isolated within a North American sea of 330 million -, Quebec's language politics have always been acute. The Grande Bibliothèque du Quebec is an emblem of the success of public policies devised in recent decades to protect the use of French there—the building is both a repository for the province's literary history and a dynamic hub for its contemporary culture. Designed by Vancouver's John and Patricia Patkau, it is also public architecture and city-building of the first order. With its combination of research library, rare books collection, children's zone, multiple

spaces are arrayed along the GBQ's main pedestrian path, as it moves up and around all sides of these slatted wooden walls, providing readers a wide variety of light, view and privacy conditions. These spatial decisions are inverted for the second and smaller "wooden room" that is home to *La collection Quebecoise* literary documents and rare books. Here a skylit reading room demurs serenely at centre, surrounded by stacks in the 19th-century manner. This dynamic balance of introverted and extroverted reader's spaces is an apt architectural metaphor for Montreal and contemporary Quebec, where enduring local traditions have come to co-exist comfortably with the finessing of global economic and technological forces.



building. Its various levels provide niches for scholars, corporate researchers, bibliomanes, teen-daters and even the homeless seeking refuge from the rain.

Despite chambers of commerce getting on the Bilbao bandwagon, art galleries are seldom "civic" in this sense. One way or another they are zones of contemplation, a key reason galleries are handed out to assertive form-makers like Frank Gehry, those pre-disposed to metaphysical claims like Daniel Libeskind, or architects pumping cyber-methods to inflate a favoured range of organic forms, like Asymtote. We over-value all three firms today, and my sense is that under the new rigours of expensive energy and more intensive city-building, their works will soon come to be seen as a kind of "Aestheticism Nouveau," the architecture of the 1990s emerging as eerily similar to that of the 1890s. It is telling that a more recent round of gallery commissions have gone to safely buttoned-down Neo-Modernists like Tanaguchi at MOMA, Brad Cloepfil's Allied Works Architecture (the renewed Seattle Art Museum, New York's Huntington Hartford Museum and others), and Herzog and de Meuron (San Francisco's De Young Museum and others.)

Qua architecture not sculpture, libraries are more interesting places than galleries not only because of the broader range of people who use them (Patkau's point), but because they are places of work, especially mental work, which is what most of us do these days, and we hanker after public spaces to enrich the task.

The recent round of North American mega-libraries—which include John and Patricia Patkau's Montreal bibliothèque, reviewed here—were strongly promoted by the business class in their respective cities. It seems collections of paper have proven surprisingly useful to knowledge-based businesses, despite—some say because of—the newfound ease of access to electronic information. The boosters, who insisted previously that even the smallest North American city build their own convention centre, have now turned to lobbying for major libraries.

public reading rooms, multi-media holdings, gallery and theatre, the sheer size and range of functions arrayed within the Grande Bibliothèque place it firmly in the architectural line of recent North American downtown libraries. While most of its holdings may be in French, its sister designs are to be found in Phoenix (Wil Bruder) and Seattle (Koolhaas); not the Parisian tradition from Labrouste's Bibliotheque Ste. Genevieve through Piano and Rogers' Pompidou Centre (containing, amazingly, France's first public lending library) to Dominique Perrault's Bibliothèque nationale.

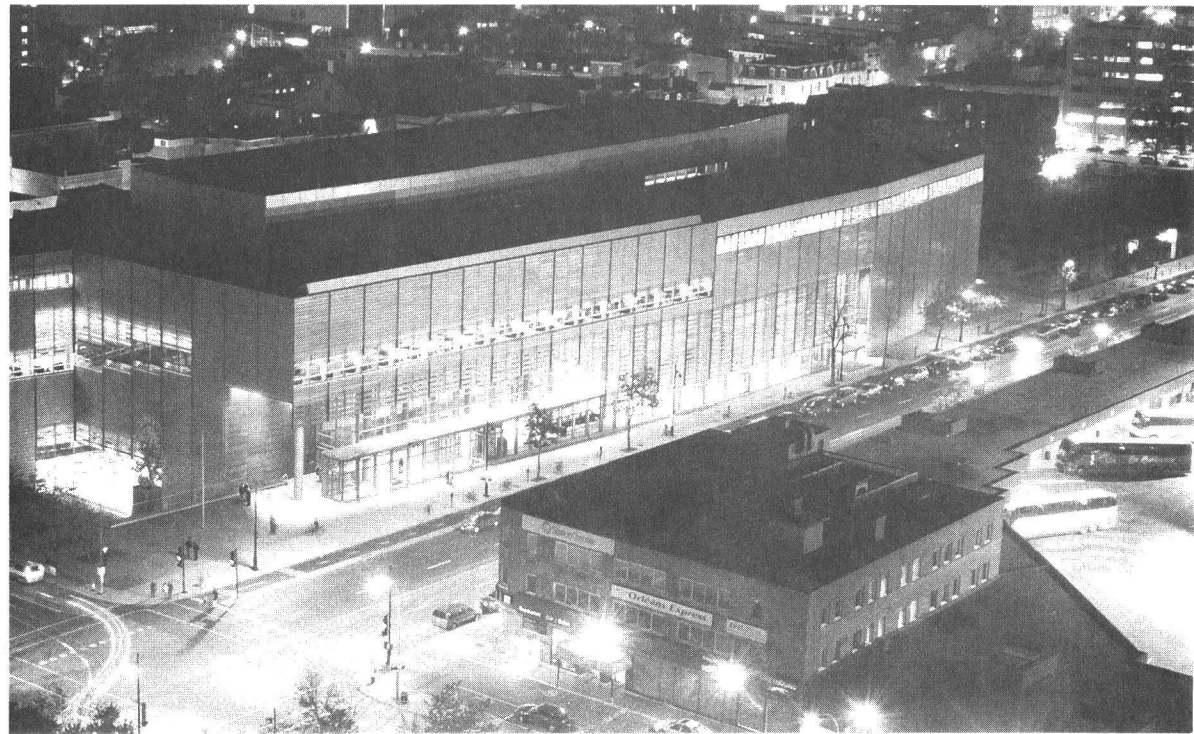
Like her contemporary, Mavis Gallant, Anne Hébert was a Quebec writer who spent much of her career in Paris. A lyrical novel she wrote there—*Les chambres de bois*—served as an initial source of inspiration to the Patkau's design team. Their GBQ concept is predicated on two louvered "wooden rooms" contained within a similarly louvered glass box, nearly filling an entire super-block, assembled between bohemian rue St. Denis, an ungainly university pavilion and the inter-city bus station, all of these set over a major Métro connection point.

According to Patkau associate designer Michael Cunningham, early designs proposed pale-green oxidized copper shingles as cladding—alluding to Montreal church towers and "chateau chapeaux" in that material—but for cost reasons this was changed to the glass louvers in the same colour, most likely a better foil to surrounding brick buildings than the metal sheets would have been. Certainly, the scale and textures of the coloured glass and wooden interior constructions resonate against the blunter concrete structure, the GBQ having an unusual—and welcome—clarity of construction.

Library patrons rise up from the Métro station or enter from a recessed corner entrance to encounter the first and largest of the two "wooden rooms" that wrap the main library stacks. A sequence of quite differing reading rooms and carrel

Quebec is doing more to fund and promote architectural competitions than anyplace else in the New World, and the GBQ design was selected by a well-run design contest, one where Zaha Hadid placed second. "Libraries are not really about sculptural form in the city," says John Patkau of both his scheme, and Koolhaas' Seattle design. Patkau points out that their building has almost the identical size and features as the Seattle library but, at just under US $50 million for the library and US $7 million for a related parking garage, it was built for one third the cost: "We were obliged to find poetics in our pragmatics."

The 40,000-square-metre GBQ is the largest building completed to date by the Patkaus, Canada's most acclaimed contemporary architects—known for their sublime houses, spatially rich schools and quietly assertive pavilions for art and universities. GBQ, however, is almost the size of all their previous buildings combined and, more importantly, demonstrates definitively that their subtle detailing and dialogue with context is not bound solely to suburban and rural sites. Grand it is.



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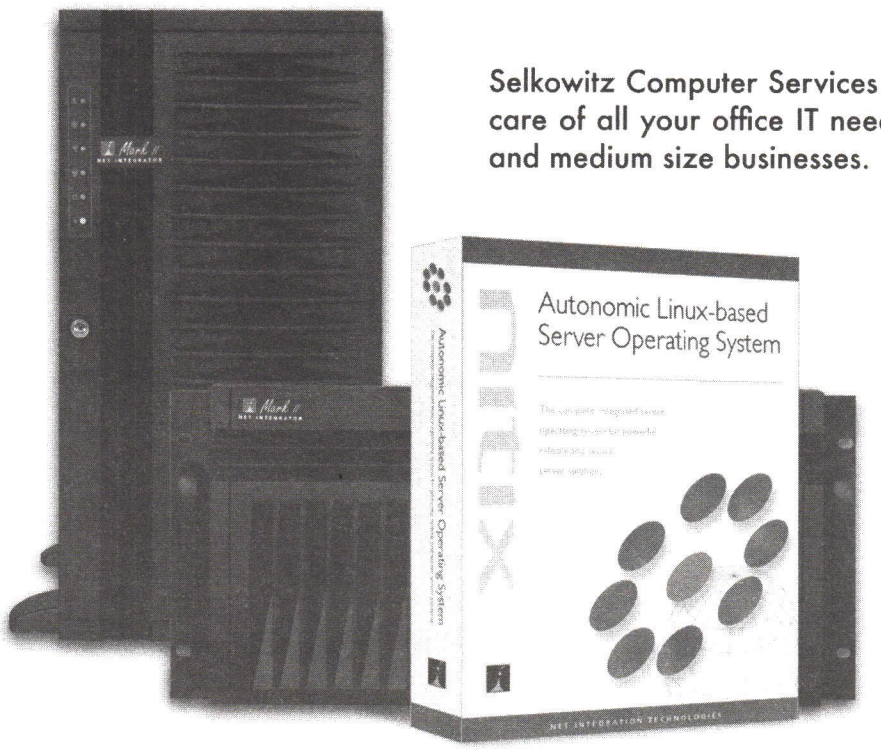

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ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN IN THE NORTHWEST

This article is written to challenge the decision-making agencies in the public sector; the agencies responsible for public building in the region and the directors and project managers who make decisions about who gets commissions. I would like them to reconsider the processes by which public commissions are given, to allow younger firms without project-specific experience on their resumes a real chance to contribute to the public realm.

Why is this important?

New Talent— Where Is The Next Public Generation ?

David Spiker

The charge of public agencies in terms of civic building is not to innovate, but to facilitate. Their public mission is to get the best talent for the money available. Public work supports the ground on which we walk. It is the unseen sidewalk, sewer or sign; just as it is the library, school, fire station and park. The catch-22 of public work is that we pay for it and we want it to be cheap, effective and not interfere with our daily lives. This built-in inhibition of cost-effectiveness forces public agencies to add another criteria: the desire to complete their mission with the least amount of stress, anguish and hassle to the agencies and their project managers. So they fall back on experience, experience and experience. Giving commissions to established offices usually produces work on time and on budget. But wouldn't the extra effort a younger firm might put out make up for the gap in experience? What is the public sectors' problem with facilitating high-quality urban projects from young and ambitious design professionals?

The process precludes taking a chance on young (unproven), talented (difficult), ambitious (they're going to challenge us, better not go there) firms that just might produce a work of real civic invention.

When I started writing this article I received a lot of interest, ambition, hubris and just plain common sense. I asked a number of local design luminaries to provide names for consideration. Then I examined the work, interviewed the offices and made choices. There were firms that wanted to be represented, per se, just because they thought they should be. There were offices that had difficulty with the issue of public work, but wanted to do it. And finally there were the offices, serious and subtle, that deserve the public commissions

they are not getting. They are denied civic work by a system that pretends to be fair, open and reasonable, yet is really too insecure to realize those conditions.

Seattle has some very big exceptions to my argument. The Seattle Public Library's *Library For All* program has produced an incredible collection of branch libraries (one just won a national AIA award) and there is OMA's amazing Central Library for the world to enjoy. The Department of Parks has made a serious attempt at design excellence in several projects. King County Library's system has produced notable projects. And Fleets and Facilities, the Seattle agency charged with accomplishing much of the City's public work, is building Weinstein A+U's Fire Station 10, another fine exception. But, where is the next generation of public architects?

My own architectural life started with public work in New York working for two 30-year-old architects that had just started their own firm. The public agencies in New York at that time had an active policy of encouraging and promoting young talent.

In Seattle, I've sat on many selection panels and always ask the agency lead where the hot young firms are. Why aren't they being selected or even considered? Invariably the answer is some variation of "they can't be trusted to do public work because they don't have the experience (designing libraries, fire stations, etc.). And we (usually the Project Managers) can't take the chance of blowing it on an unknown." Why can't an office that has designed million-dollar houses for demanding clients design a branch library or firehouse?

So, why do the six firms gathered here deserve public work? They would all like to get it and some have even achieved small commissions. But their current attitudes toward public work vary greatly, from desire to frustration, ambivalence to disinterest. They all have the skill, talent and seriousness to accomplish public work. Their offices are not large (three of them total only eight people - and several dogs) but they certainly have the capacity to successfully carry out public work. All of these firms have been published, won awards or been awarded serious art commissions. Two of them are doing multiple projects at commercial scale in China. There is a high percentage of Ivy League degrees in the group, but more importantly partners of four of the firms worked for Weinstein-Copeland or Miller Hull, two established firms heavily invested in public work.

Eric Cobb was on everyone's list. The most accomplished architect of the group, Cobb has submitted public RFPs and RFQs for years, but has never been awarded a commission. His 12-year-old, eight-person firm has built substantial houses in the northwest and his previous experience with major East Coast firms includes much complex public and commercial work. His resume is loaded with awards and publications. Why can't Eric Cobb get a public commission in this region? I asked the Capital Projects Director of the Seattle Public Library why Cobb was not included on two short-lists and received the usual answer, a refrain about lack of public experience.

Hutchison and Maul are building a $5M residence on Mercer Island on a difficult sloping site, as well as designing three commercial projects in China. Robert Hutchison, who has submitted numerous public RFP/RFQs, comments that the public process "freezes out younger firms due to lack of experience." But, he admits, public work is "different from private, with numerous public meetings, much community involvement and construction administration." Hutchison believes this situation "leads to a less diverse architectural environment in the public sector."

Eggleston/Farkas expressed great ambivalence toward public work. They are a three-person firm, founded in 1999, with numerous awards and publications. Yet John Eggleston notes, they have "spent much time and money chasing public work and been shortlisted, but never selected. It took Ed Weinstein 12 years to get his first library. The low bidder requirement sets up small firms for failure. It takes too much effort for the result." Let's hope that attitude changes over time, as I find their modest but impeccable houses delightful and would like to see their skills extended to the public realm.

Vandeventer + Carlander, has not pursued public work, but would like to get it. The eight-year-old firm is designing four projects in China after winning a Home of the Year award for their Madrona Residence. Being small, they feel "swamped when the work comes in and desolate when it leaves" according to Tim Carlander. If they can be awarded and carry out work in Asia, why can't they do the same for public agencies in the Northwest?

Heliotrope, formed in 2000, has actually accomplished several small public projects. Joe Herrin, one of three Heliotrope partners, says firms have to be proactive in seeking public work. Frustration over public agency lack of response after being listed on many "Small Works Rosters" led to them going directly to the agencies to make their case. They followed up with phone calls, emails and unannounced visits. The result is two park shelters (Ross Park, quite finely done) and a library renovation. These three projects have a budget of about 13% of the Mercer Island house mentioned above.

Lead Pencil Studio is the closest thing that the Northwest has to Diller-Scofidio in New York City. Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo have managed, through art installations, gallery designs and small offices, to become the next big thing in the Northwest design scene. They are smart, talented, ambitious and hot. But can they actually do public work? Well, Daniel has produced one of the most brilliant art programs I've ever seen, for SDOT, an agency not generally credited with extensive design interest. 4Culture, King County's arts arm, commissioned them to do their offices, in collaboration with Suyama Peterson Deguchi, and positioned them toward other projects. Daniel thinks "public work is great work, but there is a 'confidence gap' with the agencies." Like Diller-Scofidio, who were considered marginal players in the real architectural world until they were given the chance to prove themselves, Lead Pencil needs only the opportunity to show they can do it.

SHED, a design/build firm that won an AIA award for the Bradner Gardens Community Building by the Department of Parks, asked not to be included in this article. The partners, well known in the Northwest architectural scene, felt pursuing public work would undermine their design/build strengths and have decided to work in the private sector for the foreseeable future. Prentis Hale noted that SHED was "prevented from building the Bradner Gardens Community Building. This was probably a good thing for us and the public, because we would have lost our ass on the project."

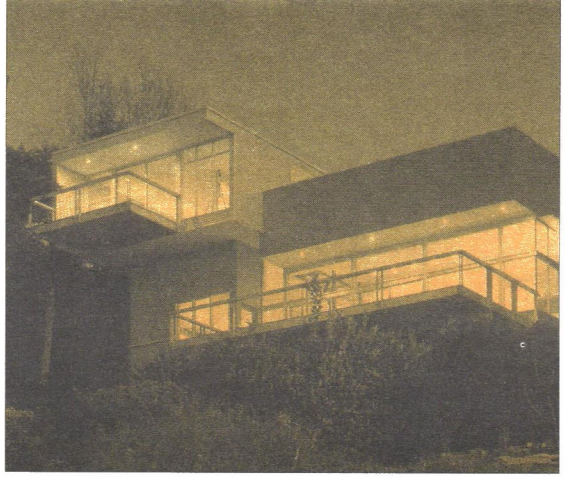
Some notes on the selection criteria: Any short list like this is highly subjective. I wanted to develop a group of architectural talent that could be legitimately tested by the bureaucrats in public agencies and found to be capable enough to award them commissions. Excluded are the many talented people who work for established firms, of which there are legions in this region. I was looking for the next bright offices, not the resident ones.

Zero Plus, Gustafson Guthrie Nichol and Iole Alddessani are examples of firms and individuals with great promise and talent considered but not included because they didn't meet the criteria for this piece: an architectural or landscape firm, on its own, with a track record of work sufficient to satisfy public project managers.

I'm sure there are other firms out there that should be in this article. Don't take it personally. Just keep trying to get public work.

David Spiker is an architect and urban designer at CollinsWoerman and Chair of the Seattle Design Commission. He keeps writing for ARCADE because they pay so well.

Eric Cobb



Milepost 9, Seattle, Wa 2004 | Photo: Chris Eden

Leschi Residence, Seattle, WA, 2002 | Photo: Paul Warchol

Eaton Residence, Seattle, WA, 2005 | Photo: Paul Warchol

Hutchison and Maul

Beach House, Mercer Island, WA.
Photo: Hutchison and Maul

Eggleston/Farkas

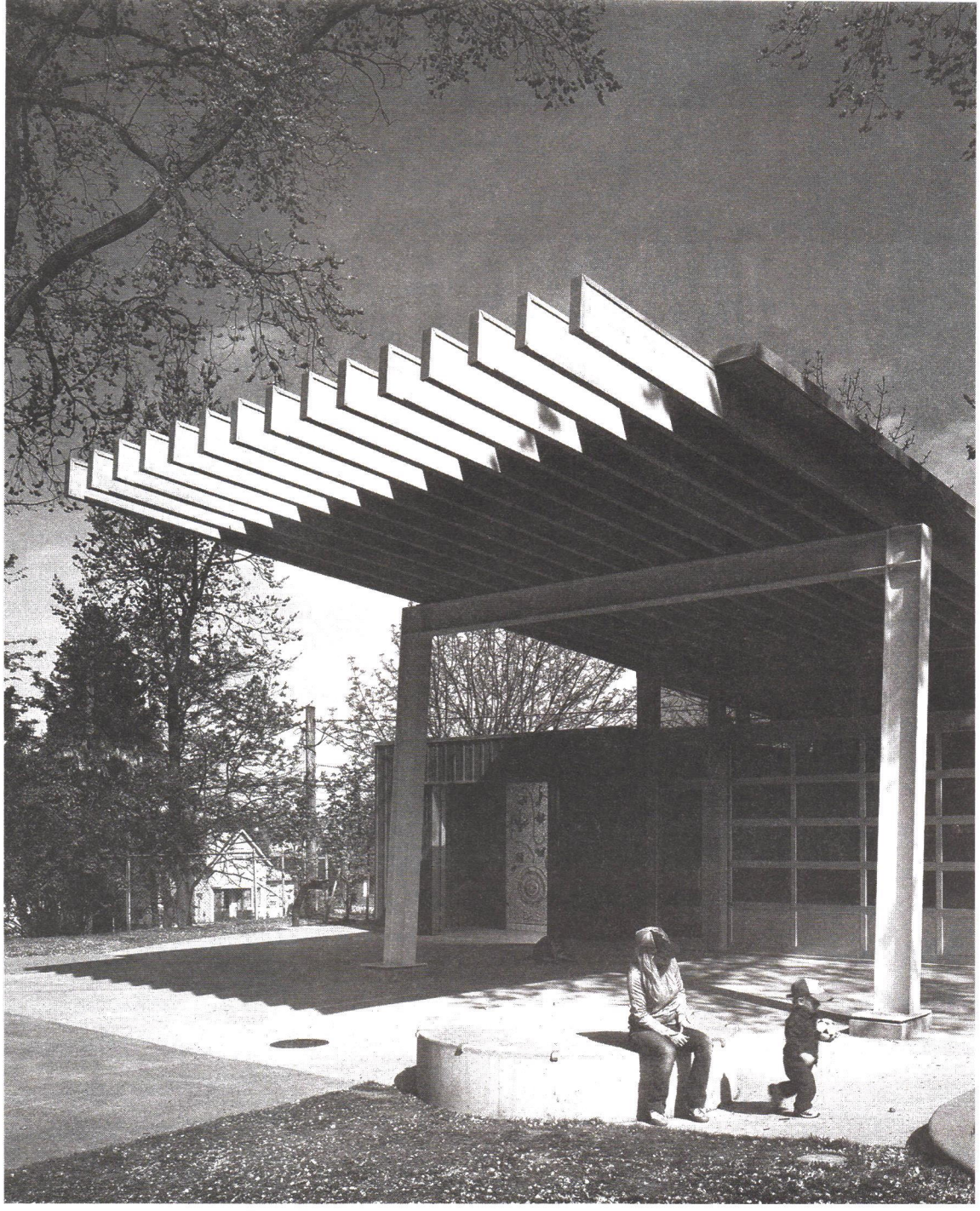
Needham Residence, 2006. | Photo: Eggleston/Farkas

Vandeventer + Carlander

Madrona Residence, Seattle, WA, 2004.
Photo: Michael Moore

Heliotrope

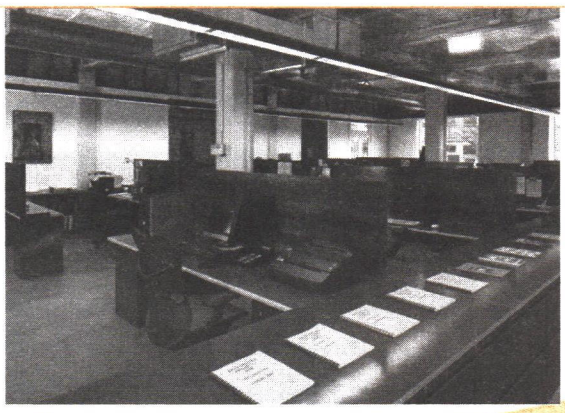
HELIOTROPE



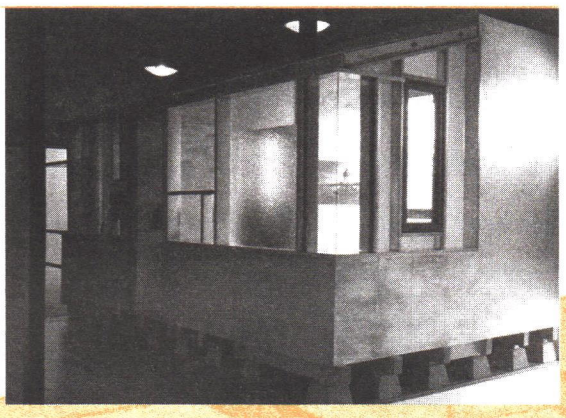
Ross Park Shelter House, Seattle, WA, 2006. | Photo: Ben Benschneider

Lead Pencil Studio

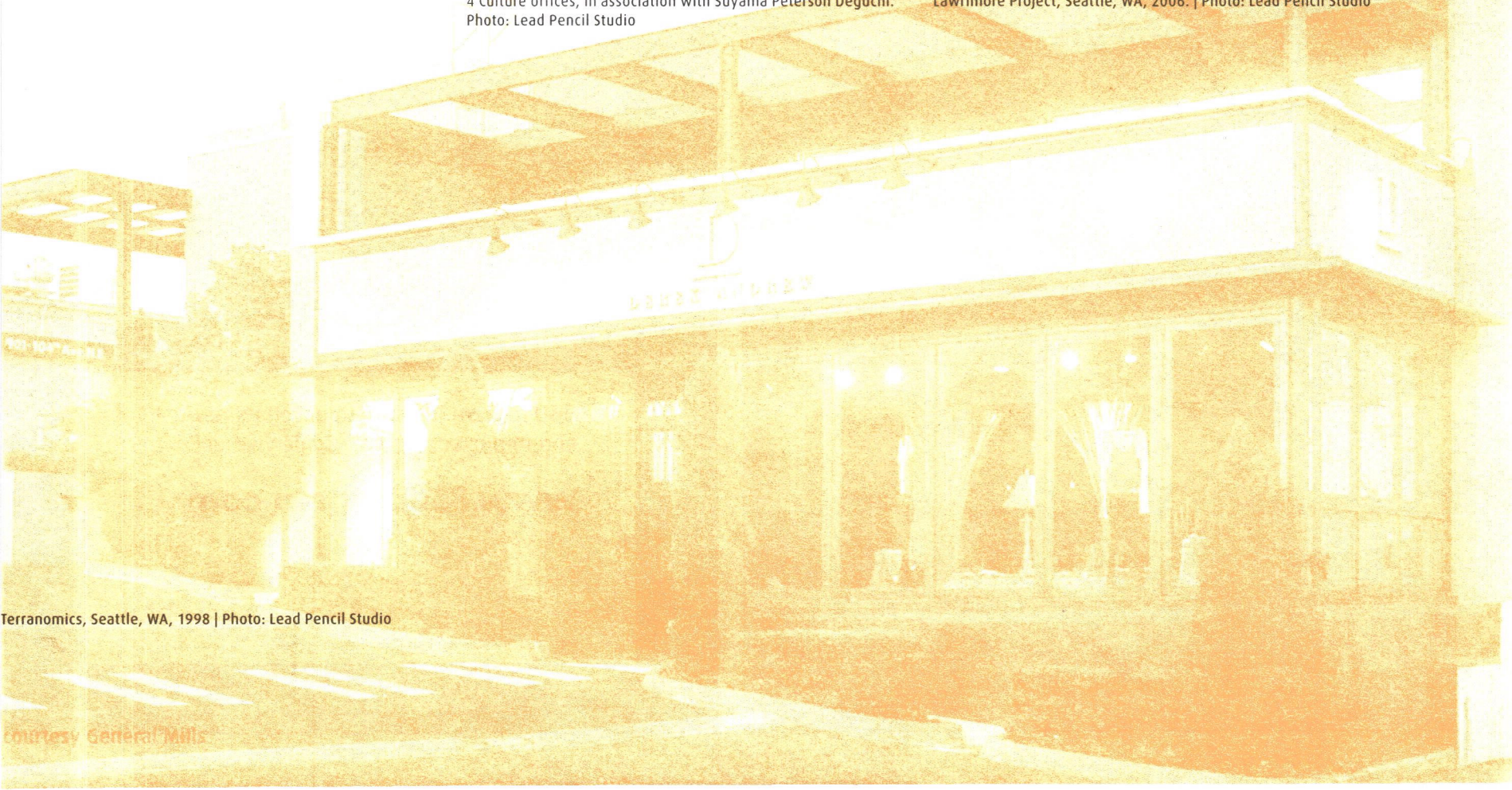
LEAD PENCIL STUDIO



4 Culture offices, in association with Suyama Peterson Deguchi.
Photo: Lead Pencil Studio

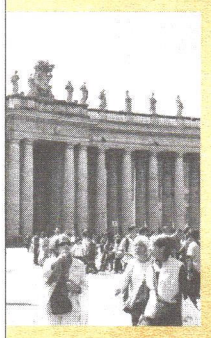


Lawrimore Project, Seattle, WA, 2006. | Photo: Lead Pencil Studio



Terranomics, Seattle, WA, 1998 | Photo: Lead Pencil Studio

Courtesy General Mills



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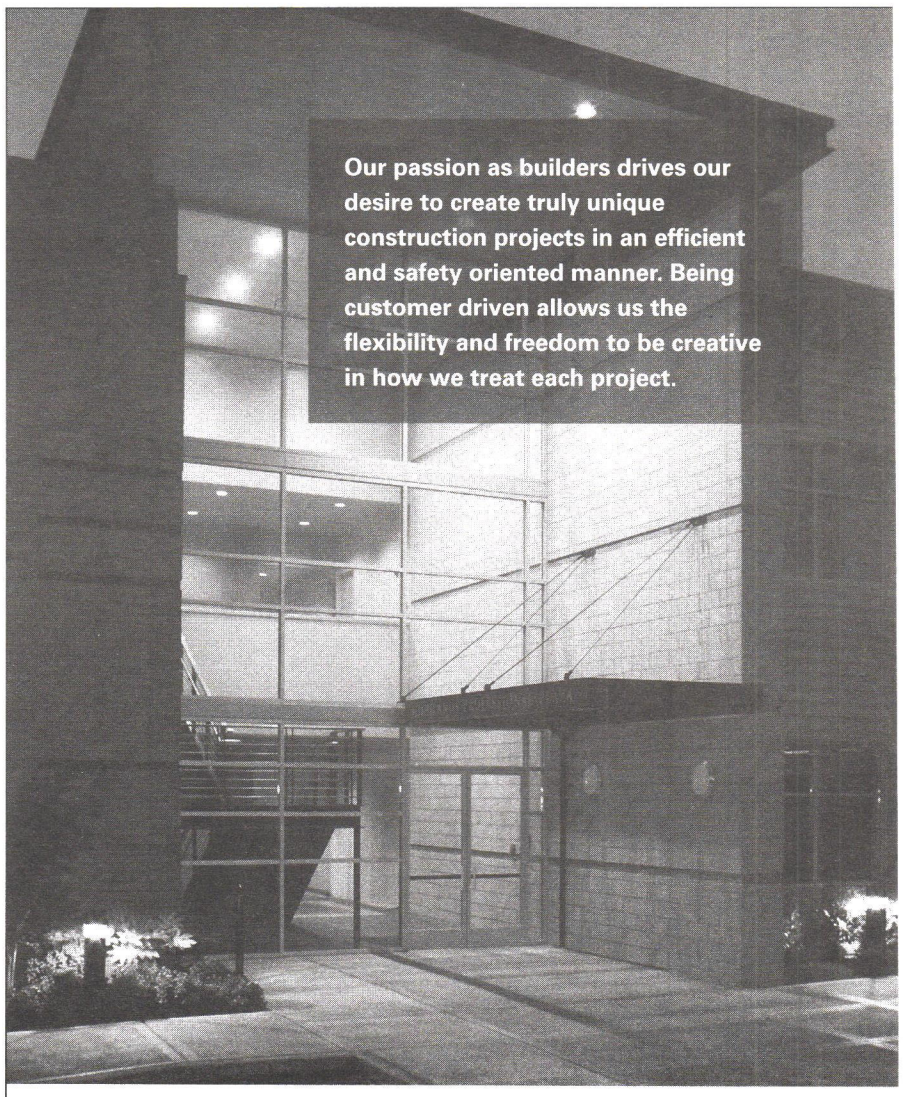

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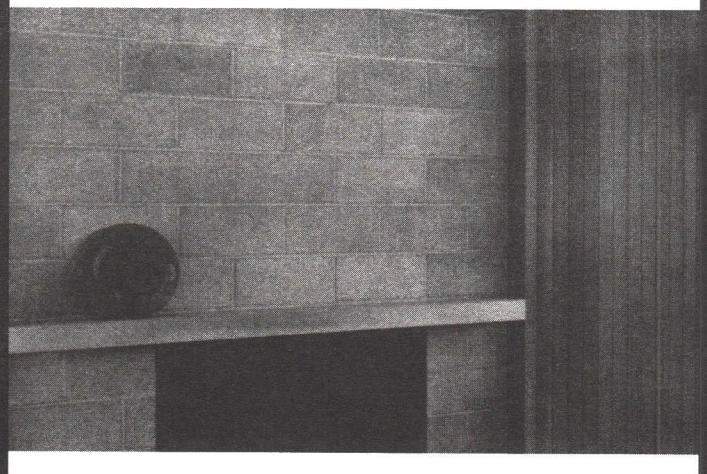

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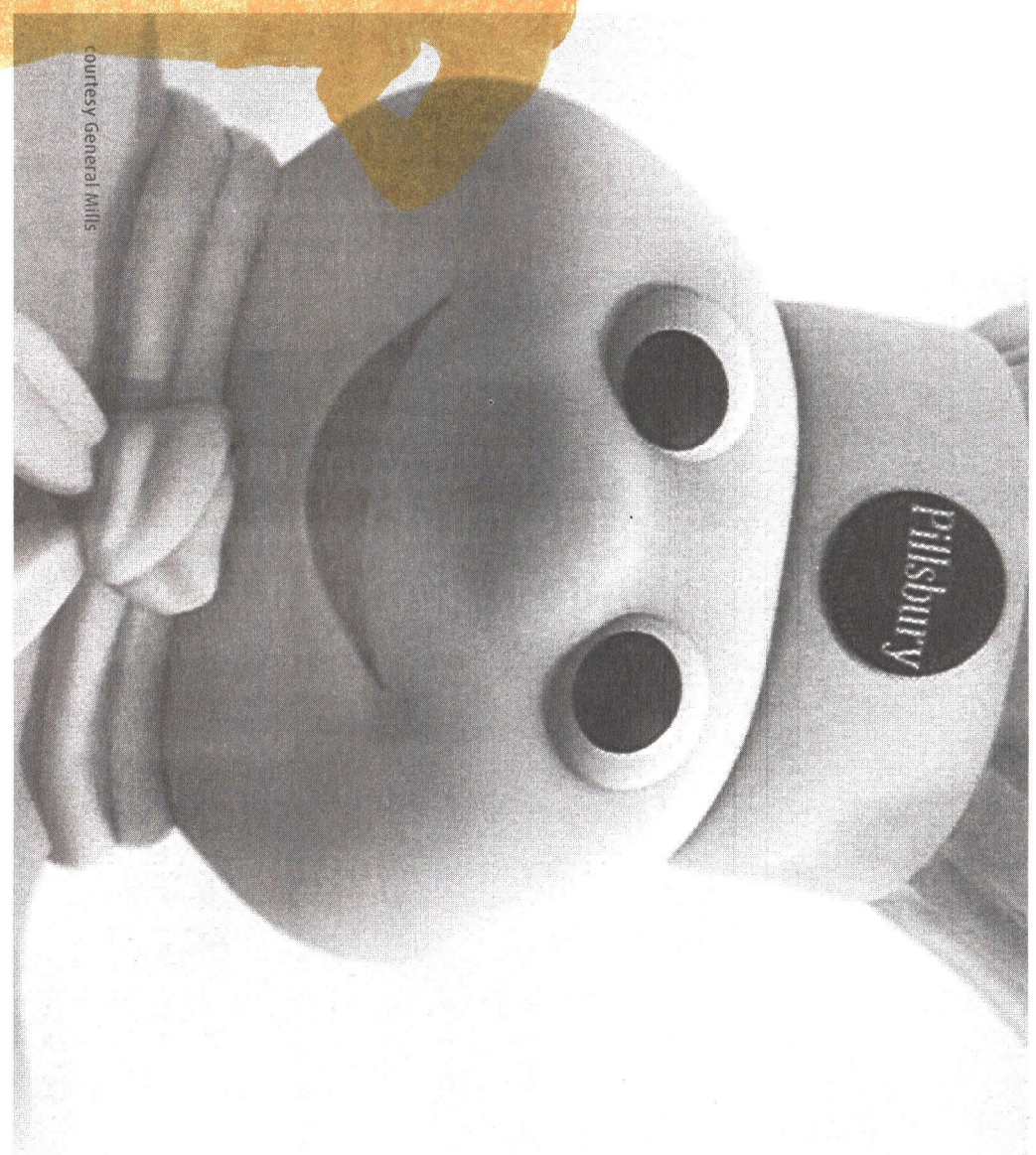
The Doughboy, Mr. Peanut, and Me

Karen Cheng

You may have noticed a new hot dog stand that recently opened in the U-district: Matt's Gourmet Hot Dogs. Unfortunately, I missed their grand opening. However, while idling in rush hour traffic last week, my attention was suddenly riveted by the giant hot dog waving from the sidewalk.



courtesy General Mills

Caught off-guard, I didn't immediately know how to respond. Then, a little self-consciously, I waved back. The hot dog danced in acknowledgement. All around me, other captive drivers beeped their approval. As the light changed and I inched out of sight, I realized I was thinking, "Hmmm...a hot dog sounds pretty good."

As a modernist, I hate to admit that I was swayed by something as irrational as an oversized tube of meat (or meat by-products). But in all honesty, brand characters work pretty well (even on jaded graphic designers). Brand characters help an audience recognize a product and associate it with a fun and engaging personality. Additionally, brand characters are usually cheaper and easier to deal with than real-life celebrities (you can control what the Pillsbury Doughboy does and says in his free time, but not, say, Martha Stewart or Snoop Dogg).

Still, even fictional mascots aren't entirely maintenance- or scandal-free. For example, General Mills has repeatedly tried to change the image of Betty Crocker from "traditional homemaker" to "modern professional," in an attempt to appease feminist critics. More recently brand managers at Procter & Gamble realized that Mr. Clean was reaching an unexpected new target as a gay style icon. (Was it his tight muscle shirt? Or the gold earring?) And even the classic Ronald McDonald needs periodic updates; in the near future, McDonald's plans to recast him as a health-conscious, active sports guru.

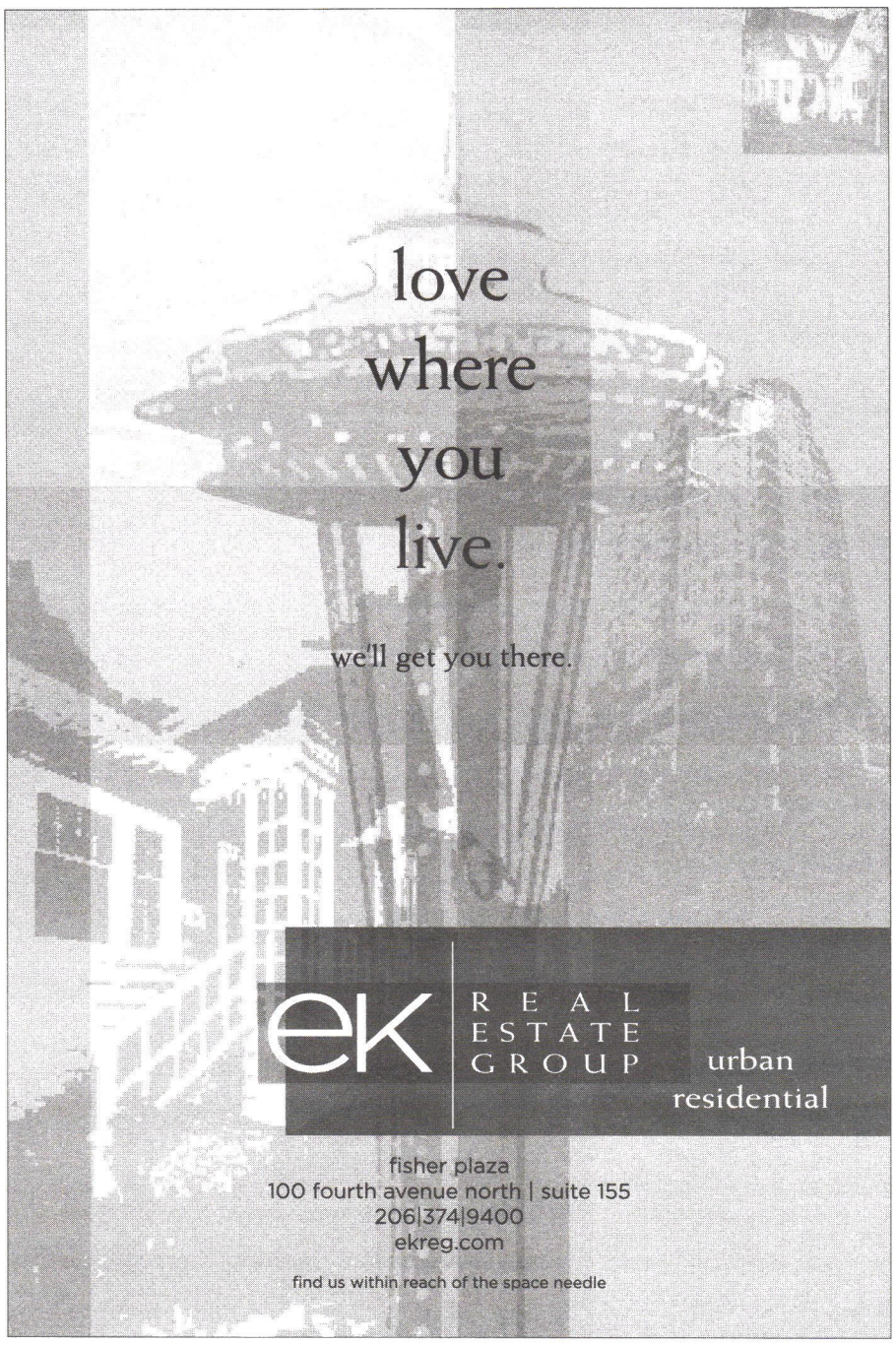
Successful brand characters are usually assigned "handlers" who protect them by creating highly detailed behavior guidelines. For example, Planters has decided that Mr. Peanut can never speak—but he can make five approved hand gestures: the wave, the thumbs-up, the hand shake, the hat tip and the hand-out (for product samples). Likewise, the Jolly Green Giant has certain things he can and can't do in the Valley (for example, he can never shake his fist, and he can only wear the red scarf to promote frozen delights).

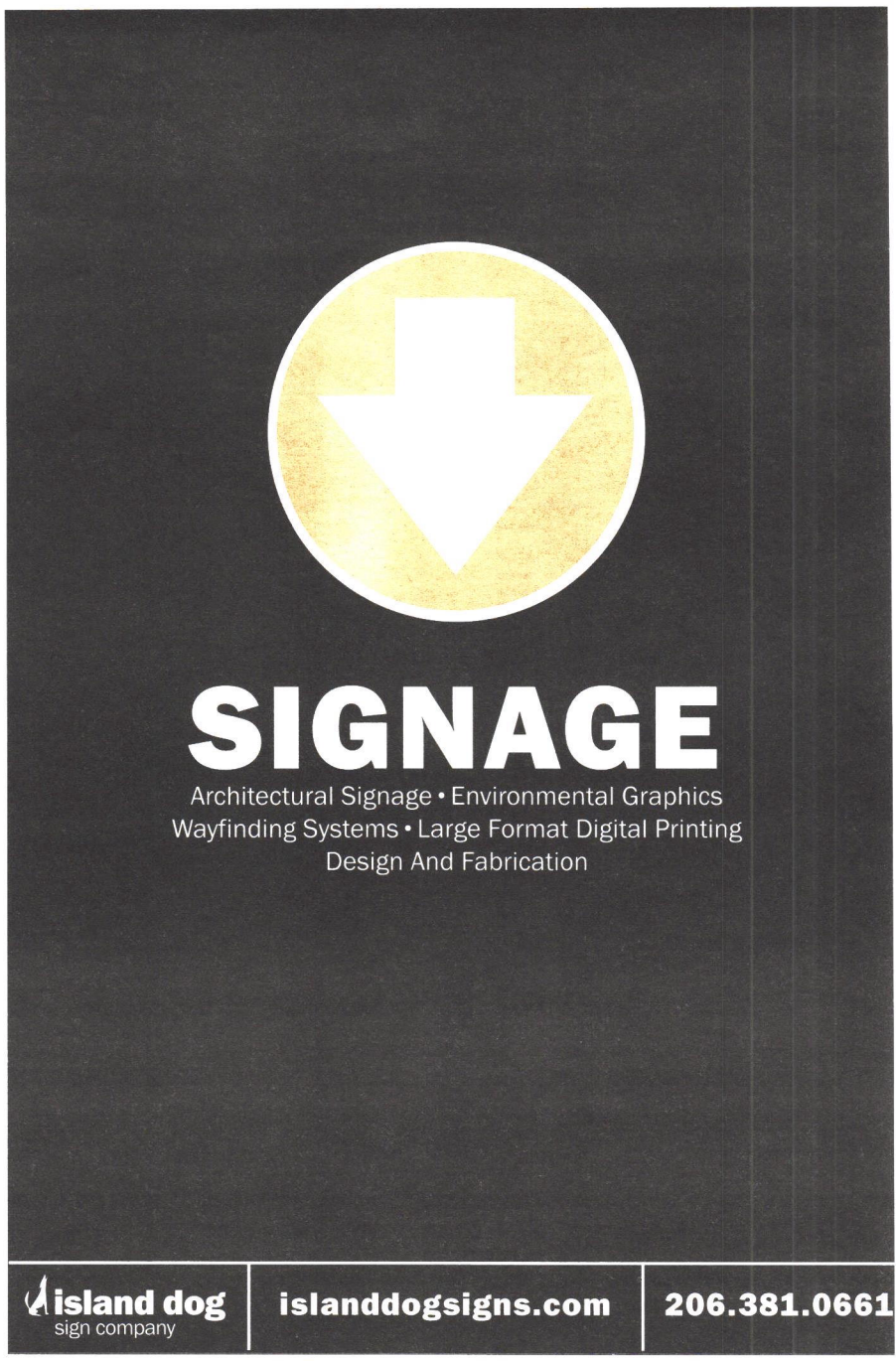
What makes one brand character more successful than another? According to David Altschul, president and founder of Character, a specialty branding firm, "a successful brand character must have flaws, vulnerabilities and conflict (preferably self-inflicted). Ideally, the character should be connected to the brand in a deep, intrinsic way. And the story of the character should reveal human truths that an audience can relate to."

One brand character who illustrates these attributes is the Maytag repairman, created by the Leo Burnett advertising agency in Chicago. The self-inflicted character conflict is, of course, that the repairman chooses to stay in an unfulfilling job (dependable Maytag machines rarely need repair). The deeper human truth is that the Maytag repairman is lonely—a human condition that many viewers can understand and relate to.

Still, I can't help but feel that Altschul overthinks the whole character issue. After all, a giant hot dog has no mental or interior life, but it's still remarkably successful in rousing cravings for a pre-dinner snack. Furthermore, some of the most successful and well-known brand characters (the Doughboy, Mr. Peanut, the Michelin Man, Elsie the Cow, the Energizer Bunny, the Kool-Aid pitcher, etc.) also have relatively simple personalities—and are often a silent presence. These characters are certainly unique, memorable and relatable...though perhaps not as conflicted as, say, Tony Soprano. In the end, it may be simply too difficult to set up an Oedipal conflict and backstory within a thirty-second spot.

Karen Cheng is a professor of Visual Communication Design at the University of Washington. She is also a practicing designer whose work has been recognized and published by the AIGA, Communication Arts, Print, Critique, I.D. Magazine and the American Center for Design.





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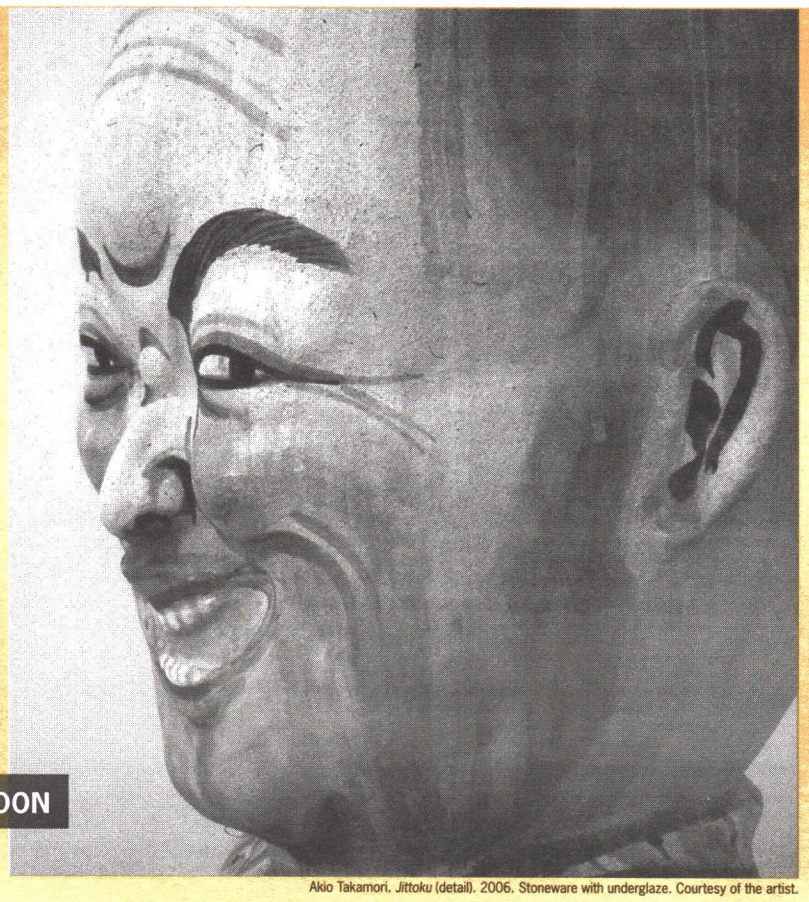

Akio Takamori. *Jittoku* (detail). 2006. Stoneware with underglaze. Courtesy of the artist.

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Space + People = Place

Paula Rees

In designing many public projects over the years, one crucial consideration has been increasingly omitted from the design process: people. Ironically, this phenomenon is happening at the very time when the public is looking diligently for a place to connect and a sense of community. The lack of face-to-face experience in what's become a computer and media-focused world is wearing thin.

The public design process has always been a balancing act of priorities, politics and power. A recurring struggle for many designers has been the need to lobby for the consideration of human physical and emotional needs to create places that offer delight, discovery and detail. If you don't believe this is true, name the last nice public restroom you visited.

When considering the dynamics of a new street, vehicles are given priority over pedestrians. After all, in most American cities the car has ruled for the past 100 years. Cars still reign, even with the growing understanding about the hazards they pose (environmental and otherwise). While reviewing many mixed-use projects at a recent development conference, one consistency became evident and distressing: streets for traffic remain wide, while sidewalks and civic spaces for people are getting narrower and smaller. This is unfortunate.

Sidewalks are the infrastructure of a great place—the bones. In our studies over the past 30 years, our design teams find the sidewalks of our favorite main streets around the world are usually in the 16-20' range, if not wider. Yet many new urban plans show skeletal sidewalk designs at only 10-12' widths. When you figure a tree takes over four feet of that space and a partial door swing gets at least a two-foot consideration, this inhibits the opportunity for the casual gathering spaces people seek with more public amenities: comfortable café zones, room for baby strollers, passing bikes, an impromptu conversation, let alone a wheelchair or family promenade.

We've carefully studied an award-winning urban area completed with 10' sidewalks. As a result, several other newer urban districts are copying this same example of minimized sidewalk widths and corresponding cost savings. Yet, only five years later the stores fronting on the narrow sidewalks are leaving their now expiring leases. At the same time, the growing activity has shifted to the more appealing 20'-wide transit bulbs. These spaces have become special and inviting places, with potted plantings, nice benches, bike racks, fountains, inset gardens, etc. Not surprisingly the surrounding businesses thrive.

In new construction, when you factor in zoning codes, permit processes, changing construction methods, conflicting schedules and related budgeting, the actual needs of human beings often get what's left. The typical development team's survival philosophy becomes, "we'll have to fix it after we get through with all this other stuff." This is a very expensive and wasteful way to meet the market successfully.

We have learned that providing "delight" means people arrive, linger, remember and return. All of these are significant accomplishments given the numerous choices available. We find a balance of delight, discovery and detail has become the hallmark of successful placemaking, whether commercial or not. And that success indicates that factoring people into the design process is a key not only to good design, but the profitability it attracts.

When bad design happens

Over the years, we have seen countless examples of design that lacked the human element—and how devastating the consequences can be. For example, when asked by several developers to review a new urban district that the public was not embracing, we arrived early to get an unbiased, firsthand sense of the problem. While exploring we were caught in a horrendous hailstorm. We quickly found there was no place to go: none of the businesses in the new mixed-use neighborhood were open, there was no shelter, no tree canopy in the public plaza, no protective pedestrian-scaled awnings over the stores or a doorway to tuck into. After walking the entire property, we ended up soaked.

Another example involves wonderfully designed ideas gone awry. A private developer was offering to contribute millions of dollars of public assets to create a central park in a mid-western city. The proposal, presented to the planning department by a collaborative of top national design firms, included custom fountains, gardens, performance spaces, an international art collection, events like movies in the park and a wintertime ice skating rink with fireplace hearths. With the intention of supplementing maintenance costs, they asked to build an ice cream pavilion with public restrooms on one end near a children's play area and an enclosed patio with wine bar and a community table on the other. But the ideas were panned by the city, which complained, "it sounds messy." The city preferred and received a block-long, plain, flat, rectangular piece of grass with trees in an edge row. The space is unused.

Good design puts people first

When walking down a street, the sense of discovery can be as simple as an unexpected pattern in the sidewalk, a beautiful shop window or a tree's shade. The beauty of individual locations is that each one has different demands, essences, realities and expectations. Real places, like the people they attract, are emotional, sensual, organic and impossible to formulate.

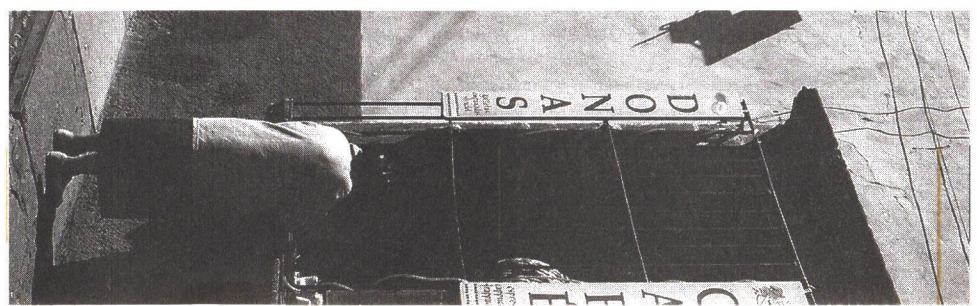
While visiting a Mexican hill town, it was amazing to observe the overwhelming numbers of elderly North Americans who flock there for the experience of walking on a irregular, rough-stone sidewalk, appreciating all the things that are prohibited in most of our cities. There is no casino, no beach and no draw other than the experience of this place. Meandering streets abounding with visual discoveries and details create an environment in which to simply enjoy the presence of other people.

Addressing the fluctuations of a place is an often overlooked or missed opportunity, as specific, dated and repetitive planning dominates most processes. But by delighting users, offering opportunities for discovery and adding details that create a unique sense of place, well-designed spaces can invite people to attain a sense of place in the world.

Basically, the design of pedestrian-friendly streets and great public places takes great care and consideration. And as designers, it is our job not to forget the most important ingredient of any successful public place: the user.

Paula Rees is president of Maestri, a multidisciplinary design firm based in Seattle that specializes in the design and marketing of large, mixed-use urban places internationally. Maestri's highly successful environments have won numerous placemaking awards.

Photo: Maestri



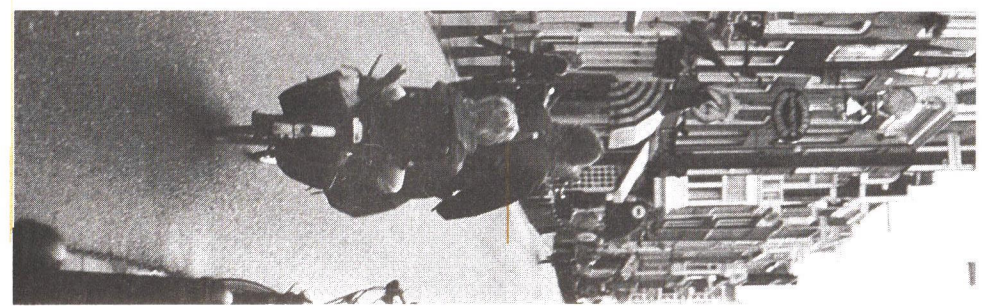
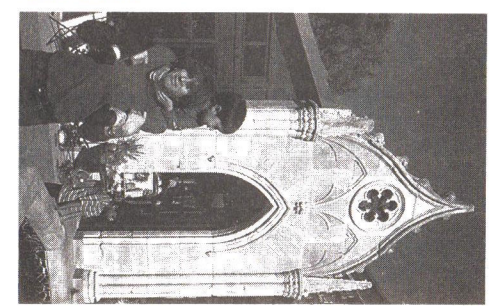
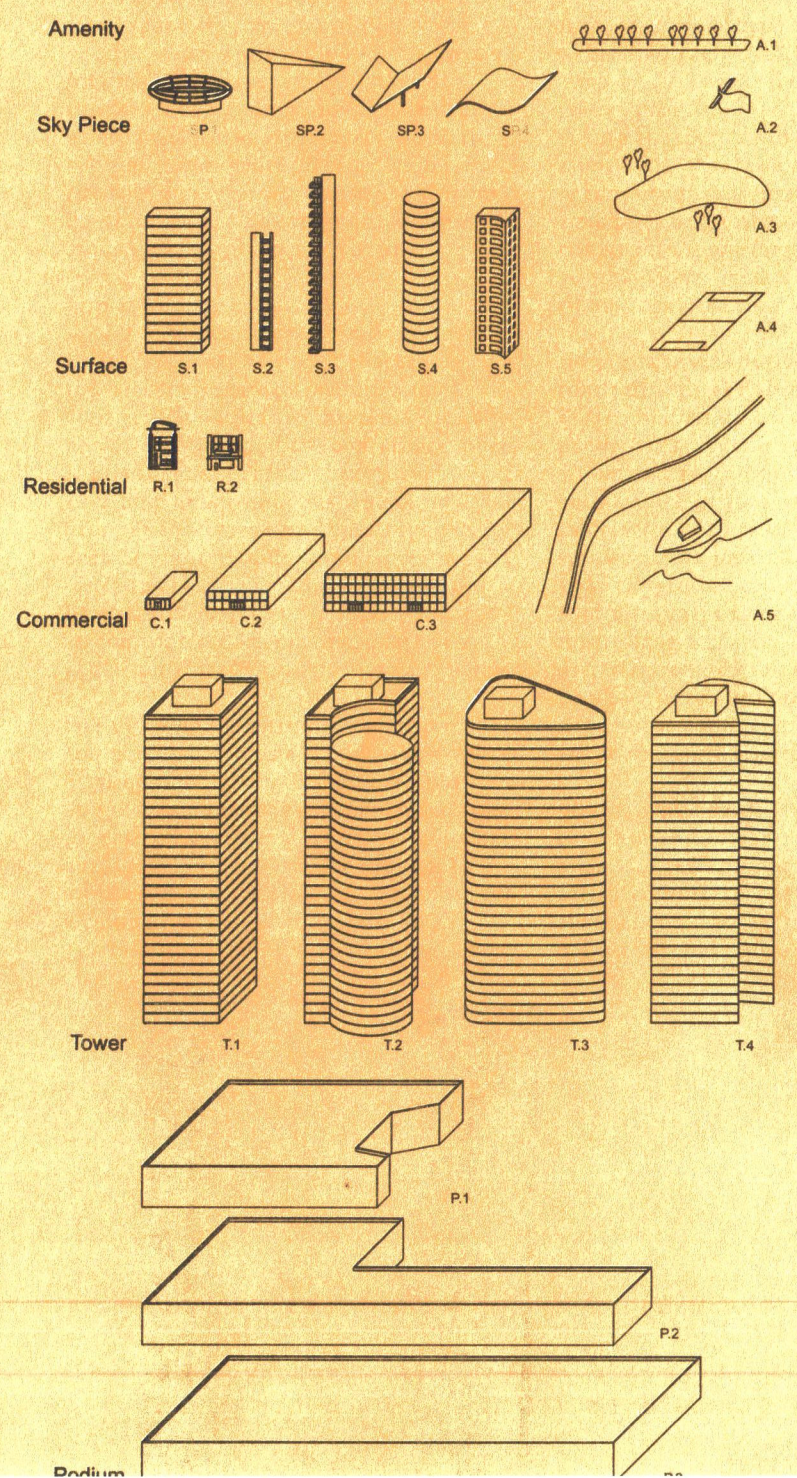


Photo: Maestri



The New-Urban-Suburban: too much livability in Downtown Vancouver?

Julie Bogdanowicz and James Eidse



Can a city have too much of a good thing?

Bogdanowicz

Fifteen years ago, Vancouver's planning department released "Living First", a document charting a strict development plan for the city. Since then, Vancouver's downtown has grown dense and livable, and has gained an international reputation for good urban development: "The Vancouver Model" or "Vancouverism."

The use of the word "model" is telling. It implies a kit of parts that fit together in a limited number of ways, resulting in a city where the majority of new buildings follow the same narrowly conceived pattern. Development goals listed as bullet points, a city in point form:

- tall, thin point-tower
- podium base (with town houses or commercial use)
- parks and civic amenities (negotiated from developer for greater density)
- privacy and quiet repose
- maintenance of views (ensured through view corridors)

In principle, the elements on this list are not flawed, but the ruthlessness of the plan begs for variation. Vancouver's urban life has been stifled by the steady use of this Model.

Eidse

Any "model" will only serve to obstruct the unexpected. A process approach would take us some way toward a city that values difference, exceeding preconceived expectations. The primary innovation of the planning department has been the introduction of discretionary zoning. Each site is reconceived as particular, negotiable. This flexibility enables the planners to negotiate public amenities from developers in exchange for density bonuses: Vancouverism at its core.

These developments have the potential to produce a truly "new" urbanism, doing away with outdated functionalist zoning in favor of a contingent, process-based methodology. Who knows what amenities might be invented or what architectures might result?

Bogdanowicz

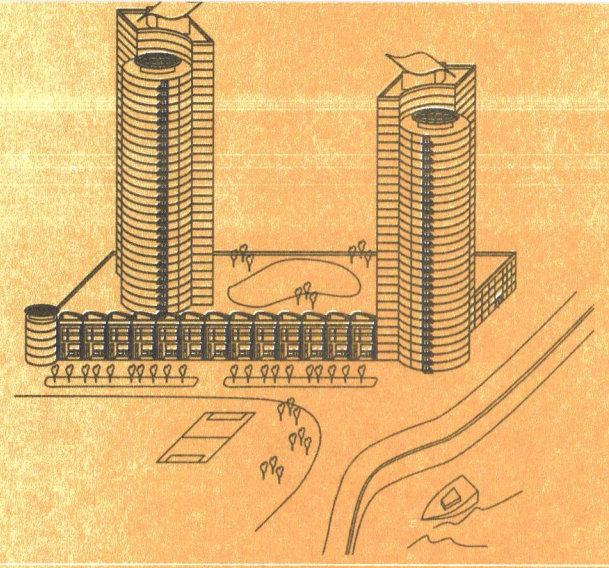
But the very ideology of "livability" may inhibit the potential of such discretionary freedom. In an attempt to curtail sprawl by increasing housing in the center of the city, Vancouver planners have made a livable downtown that appeals to suburban needs of predictability and control. The Vancouver Model is laudable in its attempt to address the issues that forced suburbanites out of the city in the first place; but, in some respects, this conception of

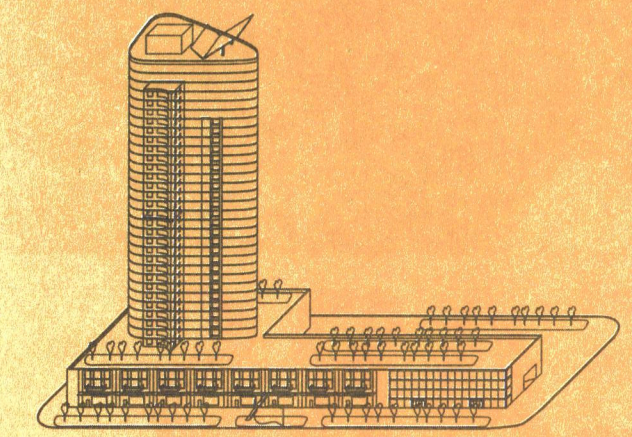
livability impedes urbanity.

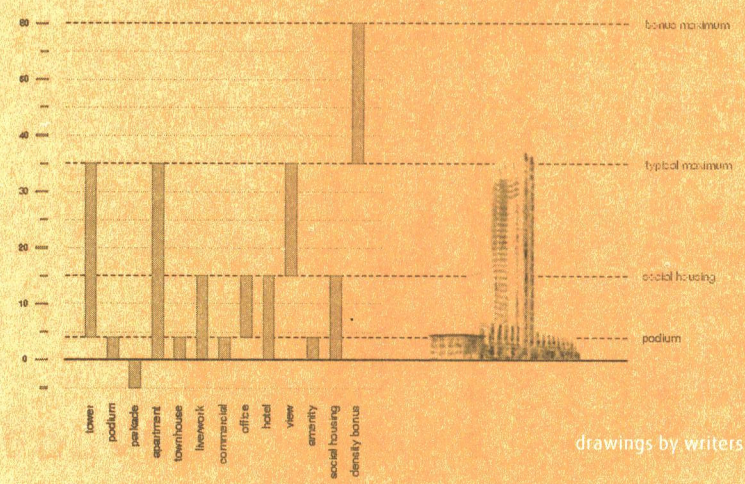
Eidse

The discussion needs to shift from a focus on form, to an understanding of architecture as a device of spatial organization. There seems to be a concern that reconsidering architecture's role in this way would somehow

challenge the tidiness of this city.







drawings by writers

ing?

Vancouver downtown development is nearly finished, with only a few large parcels remaining. Our city will then serve as case study on how to make a livable downtown. The lessons might enlighten cities like Seattle and Los Angeles who are interested in the livable downtown. Our hope is that they will expect more from narrow ideas of what livability is. The lesson from our city: Livability, expect more.

The tidy city is delivering qualities that people seek, but the Vancouver Model obstructs the things that make a downtown a downtown: the mess, vitality, noise, unpredictability, danger, oppression... Tidying has become a civic duty. The city gives people what they want, the kit of parts that comprise livability:

privacy, quiet, neighborhood, block, street, park.

Of course a successful city has to be livable, but the livability in Vancouver has been narrowly defined and the preconceptions of the Model obstruct possibilities. The planning department has not been critically engaged with the city. Instead it has coasted on this formula. Livability is the ideology through which the Model manifests itself. The potential for Vancouver to be reconceived as a process, open and adaptable, has been obscured.

Eidse

I don't completely buy the ideology argument. The hybrid composition of the point-tower on podium is a case in point—where the podium addresses a New-Urbanist deference to the street, and the point-tower achieves a Hong Kong-style valorization of residential density. It's a sort of New Urbanism from the waist-down—like a pair of brown cords with a Gore-Tex jacket. The compromise of this approach proves a willingness to bypass the strictures of ideology in response to contextual specificities.

My sense is that planners are a pragmatic group that simply want to be shown something better. The perceived orthodoxy of the present situation has as much to do with the architects' failure to imagine and communicate other possibilities as it does with any sort of dogmatism on the part of the planning department.

Bogdanowicz

Yet vancouverism has emerged as an ideology in its own right. The promise of our early innovations (discretionary zoning and tower/podium hybridization) have become doctrinaire.

This leaves little room for ingenuity and results in an architecturally monotonous downtown core. Larry Beasley, the Director of Planning, argues that people want levels of livability and not "some kind of wild architecture." Somehow, livability and architecture have become mutually exclusive which has enabled a new-urban-suburbanism in downtown Vancouver, with too much living above all else.

Eidse

But the Model hasn't stifled the creativity of architects so much as it has redirected its distribution. The problem isn't that the buildings look the same, but that they fundamentally are the same and don't necessarily look it. Architects have responded to the planners' Model by manipulating the only variable that remains: a frivolous play of surfaces. Architects have become either complacent participants in this marginalization, or have attempted to operate outside of this context, positioning themselves as critics rather than actors.

Architectural practice has to change to keep pace with the evolving nature of the city.

Julie and James met in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia's School of Architecture. Julie has graduated and is leaving Vancouver. She recently co-produced a documentary film with Robin Anderson on Vancouverism in Vancouver. James is currently co-editing a book series titled "Vancouver Matters" and will begin his thesis in the fall.

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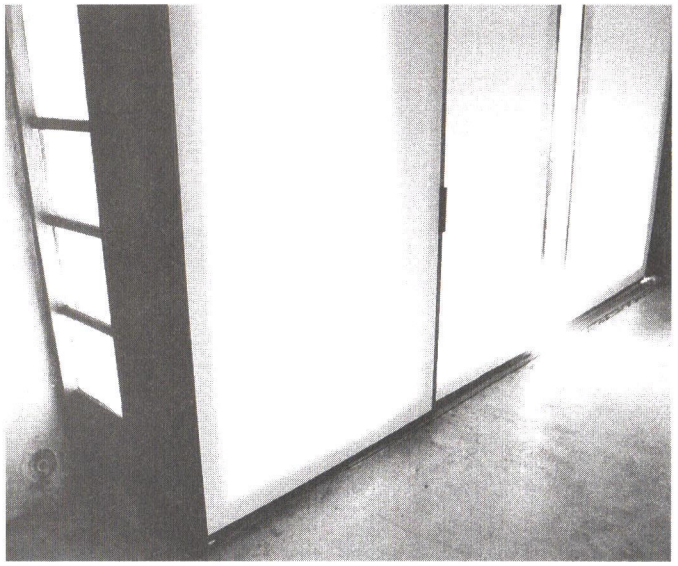
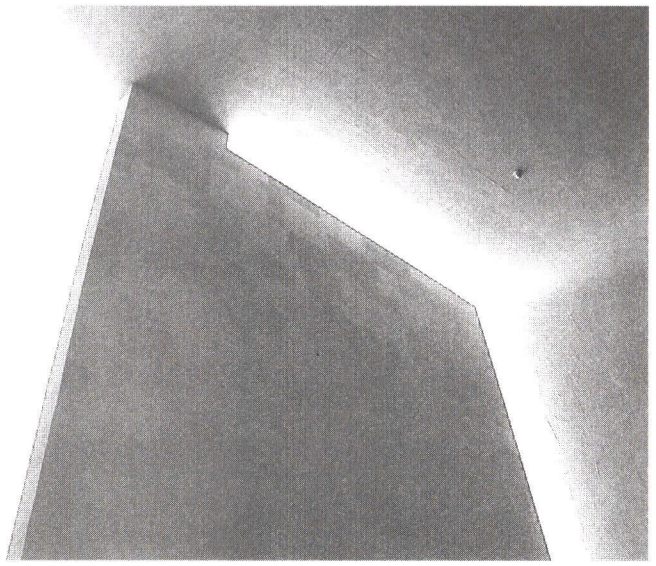
Light Falling on Architecture

Michael Burns

Natural light, artificial light, existing light, ambient light, good light, bad light, indifferent light, no light at all. Who's responsible for light falling on architecture, the light in architecture, architectural light? Is it the architect? The lighting designer? Those who craft building codes? Clients? Or, have mercy on my soul, is it the photographer!





As a photographer of architecture, I might wish that designers would put the consideration of light very near the top of the list. Not just light to see by, but light to live by. Light that might invest space with drama and wonder. One definition of the purpose of art is to "delight and instruct." Not a bad definition of the purpose, or potential, of light as well.

In the forward to English photographer Richard Pare's book, *Tadao Ando: The Colours Of Light*, Ando reflects on Pare's approach to photographing architecture:

"While architectural photography is most often a medium of reportage, Pare's sense of beauty allows him to capture the drama of architecture. His work is an example of representation where details can grasp the essence of a building far more effectively than images of the whole.

He discovers scenes in a building which even the architect has not noticed, he allows the materials to be self explanatory and the forms to express their functions. The light coming into a space is frozen in an instant in Pare's viewfinder and printed on our retinae, becoming a phantasmic beauty beyond real time." Well, that sounds very nice, doesn't it? Especially the part about "capturing the drama of architecture."

How, exactly, does one do that in a photograph? Certainly one way is to work with good light falling on architecture.

But what is good light in architecture? Maybe it's enough to work with existing light in architecture, comprised of both natural and man-made light. I would suggest that the architect has the opportunity and responsibility to observe and imagine ways to present the possibilities of light to illuminate form and space. Again, to "delight and instruct."

To quote Richard Pare from his ten-year book project photographing Ando's work, "As there was only a finite amount of time on each journey, I worked in all weather conditions. This led to an awareness of the subtle effect that illumination has on Ando's architecture. Each structure became a succession of spaces in which the mass was dissolved in light, creating a heightened sense of the enclosed space." Again, "*I worked in all weather conditions*" (my italics). Quite lovely really.

Well, if such a dedicated and gifted photographer is going to work in all weather conditions to illuminate another's architecture, I guess the architect better factor that into his plans. Or at least do something to deserve such a gifted investment.

This leads to a rather crucial consideration in the depiction of architecture. As photographers, should we "light" architecture? If so, to what end? To be able to "see" everything? Everything, that is, except the light design and light intention of the architect, how the space is perceived and presented in existing light, the architect's light...

South African painter Marlene Dumas has this to say about her work: "At the moment my art is situated between the pornographic tendency to reveal everything and the erotic inclination to hide what it's all about." I love this description. Might this resonate with making photographs of architecture? To show enough, but leave something to the imagination, something outside the image, but implied by the image, the drama of something felt.

Where did this fashion of over-lighting in architectural photography come from? Do we really need to see every kitchen drawer and pull, every sconce and girandole, every cornice and coving, leading to airless and literal depiction?

What happened to Ando's "drama of architecture?"

Robert Polidori's photograph of Renzo Piano's recent addition to Manhattan's Morgan Library accompanying Paul Goldberger's *New Yorker* article shows Piano's interior space as it is, with no added "lighting." The mood, the drama, the light of Piano's space is preserved and presented as envisioned and designed. Without question, there are some areas of deep tonality, obscuring a totally precise reading of every last surface. One might do well to refer to Caravaggio or Vermeer for a lesson in the effects of chiaroscuro light on the drama of architecture.

Between photographic "lighting" and extreme digital manipulation, a less confident and less sophisticated photographer would have felt compelled to deal with those embarrassing dark areas. "Light" them, put in a little "sizzle."

In the end, it comes down to this: Is the photographer's goal to photograph architecture? Or to make architectural photographs?

How light falling on architecture is either respected and treasured or dismissed and "improved," is pivotal. On one hand the result is a kind of photographic parfait, whipped to within an inch of its life. Alternately, the resulting work may offer respect for photographic and architectural truth, a reflection and illumination of the way things are.

As Leonard Cohen intones in *Be For Real*, "I don't give a damn about the truth, except for the naked truth, ah yeaaah..."

Michael Burns is a photographer of long standing. His work can be seen at www.michaelburnsphoto.com.

Photos: Michael Burns

Artists in the Wires

Jack Mackie

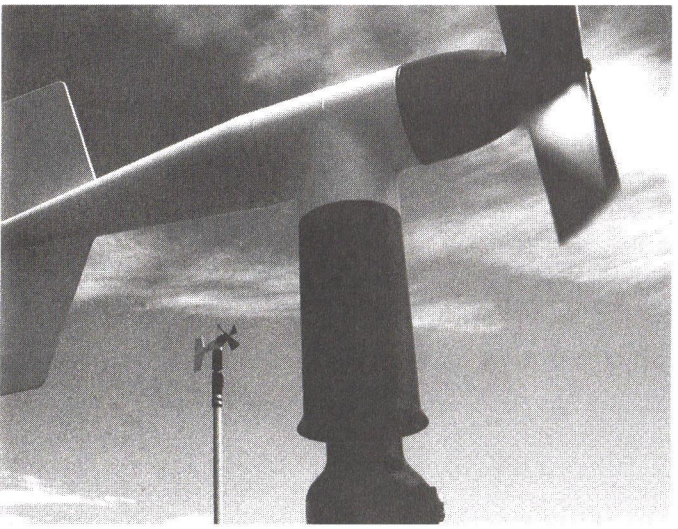


Photo: Don Fels

Traditionally, people have thought of public art as isolated sculpture placed in a plaza, park or building, often unrelated to place or context. Artist Red Grooms used to say that a measure of successful public art was tourists wishing to have their pictures taken in front of it.

In the last decade or so, many people have morphed their view of public art so that it is now considered as a necessary decoration or Band-Aid on a building—the purpose being to mask inferior design, mitigate a blank concrete wall or some other worthy cause. Some viewed this as a positive integration of art and architecture, like the Arts and Crafts era when art embellished a building's façade. Certainly some favorite Seattle buildings—the Arctic Building, for example—exemplify this approach. Many artists, however, view this as compromising the very essential role of art to illuminate or question the status quo.

Artists view their role as neither decorators nor mitigators, but as interpreters and elucidators. Many view public art as not a thing, but as a way to engage with streetscapes, wetland restorations, sewage reclamation, transit and roadway works, and tectonic watersheds. These projects begin with idea, context and meaning, all only waiting to be illuminated. Understanding that the pipes, wires, roads and electronic connections are not simply "built infrastructure," but are the network systems that connect our cities, neighborhoods, homes and us to place, artists have long exposed the innards of our built environments. Of late, it is artists who are the illuminators of information-as-art, art-as-place, systemic art and art-as-the-people who occupy a place as event.

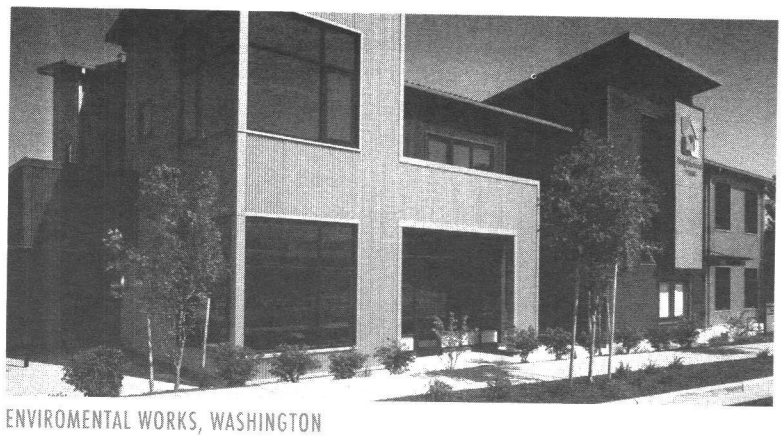
In Seattle we are offered art via data interpretation of the microclimates flowing along the roof of the Ballard Library. Mindful of the Library's function as both a repository and generator of information, artists Donald Fels, Andrew Schloss and Dale Stammen created artworks that turn weather information into visual and auditory patterns. The building's computer-generated artwork uses data from devices on the roof that measure sunlight, the sound of rain, and wind speed and direction to interpret the data and respond to climatic changes by triggering patterns of motion in LED displays inside the library, as well as combinations of sounds in and around the Neighborhood Service Center next door.

In light rail stations in the center of Cisco Systems' San Jose campus, artists Ellen Sollod and Bob Teeple reveal, through digital animations, comments on vernacular language and icons of the 20th century. The artwork, covering the interior ceiling perimeter of the shelters, sets a stage for images and text derived from computer jargon, American Sign Language, *Vernacular Generation*, Morse code, semaphores, animated portraits of famous political leaders, television journalists, movie stars and symbols from our worlds of work—all provoking thought about the meaning of icons, images and words in our society's common parlance.

Artist George Legrady's electronic artwork "Making Visible the Invisible," in the Seattle Library, presents different ways of analyzing and visually mapping in real-time checkout data from the Central Library. The artwork consists of six large Liquid Crystal Display screens that run horizontally in a glass wall above a reference desk. Like a stock exchange ticker using library data received each hour from the Central Library's Information Technology department, animated "visualizations" float across the six screens. The data shows what Seattle is thinking based on the flow of books leaving the library. The visualizations show what people are reading. Each of these projects represents a different way of engaging the public in an understanding of the environment in which they find themselves. To these artists, the message is the medium. There will always be plenty of room for just beautiful art—terrazzo floors, tiled columns, marvelous glass walls. But it is real-time work that engages the people who occupy the place in new and curious ways, anchoring them in the immediacy of the moment.

Jack Mackie is a public artist based in Seattle. His practice includes large infrastructure projects, arts planning and studio-based worked.

photo: Sollod Studio, ©2004.



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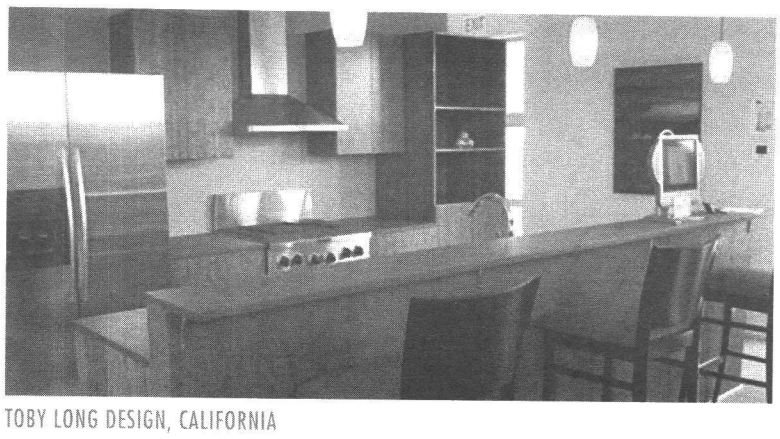

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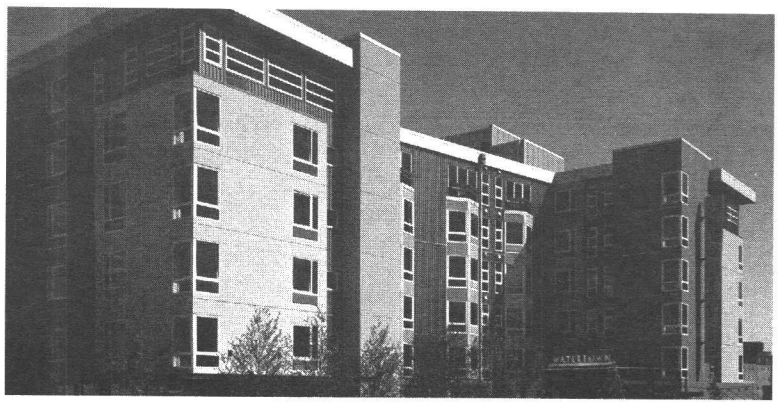

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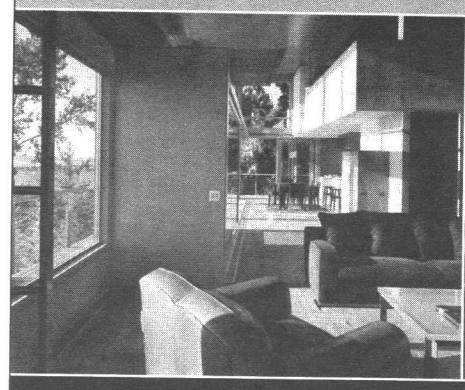

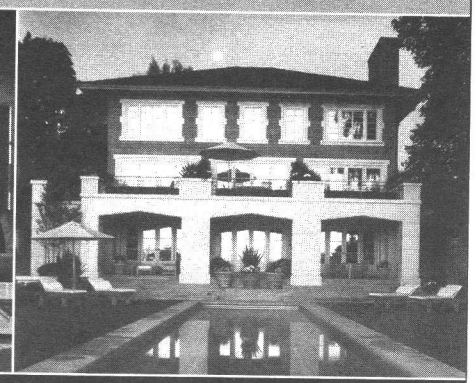

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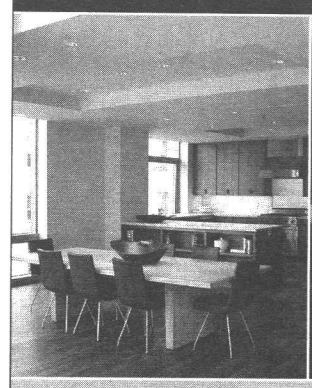

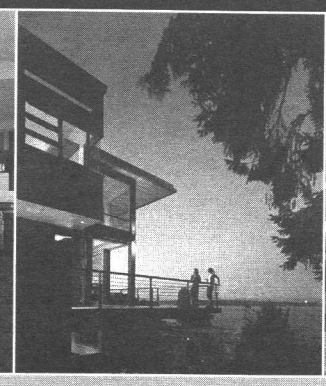

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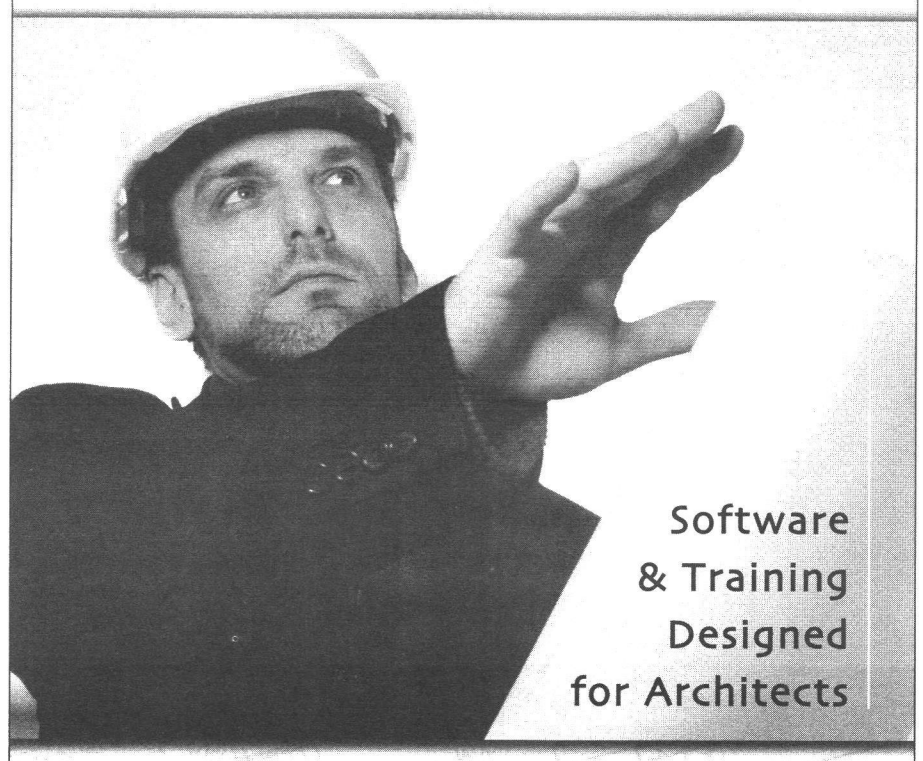

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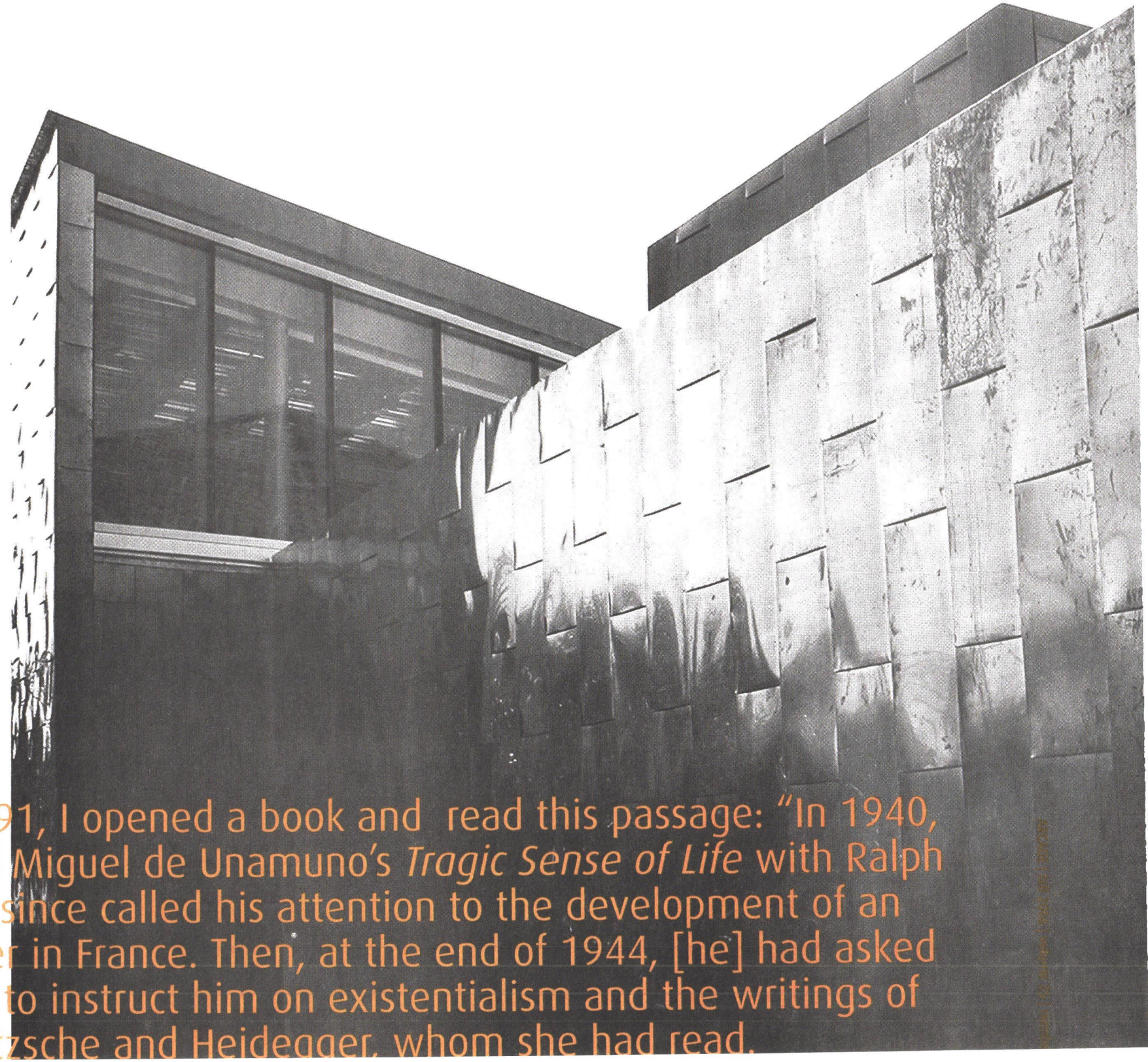
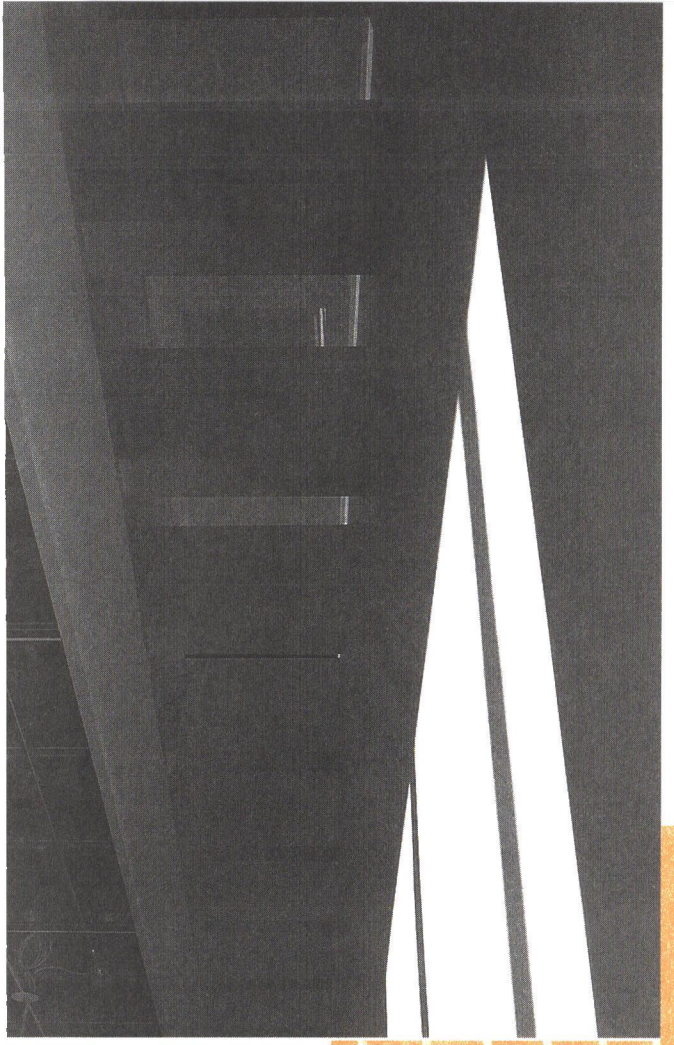


In summer of 1991, I opened a book and read this passage: "In 1940, he had discussed Miguel de Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life* with Ralph Ellison, who had since called his attention to the development of an existential theater in France. Then, at the end of 1944, [he] had asked Dorothy Norman to instruct him on existentialism and the writings of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger, whom she had read.



endt over so that they could discuss the topic with him. He had also recently bought the English translation of Kierkegaard's *Conception of Dread*...."

The subject of this passage, Richard Wright, would keep that book, *Conception of Dread*, with him until his death in 1960. In 1953, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger inspire Wright's most dazzling failure, the existentially titled novel, *The Outsider*. And during his final, international (or Third World) period (1955-60—a period that the author of Black Atlantic, British sociologist Paul Gilroy, argued is grossly underappreciated and is as important as his Chicago period), Wright reads *The Burden of Our Time* by Hannah Arendt—the woman who, in the mid-20s, was a student and lover of the father of 20th-century existentialism, Heidegger (he 35/she 18), and in the mid-40s helped introduce Wright to the ideas made famous by Heidegger's groundbreaking (or ground-clearing) *Being and Time*.

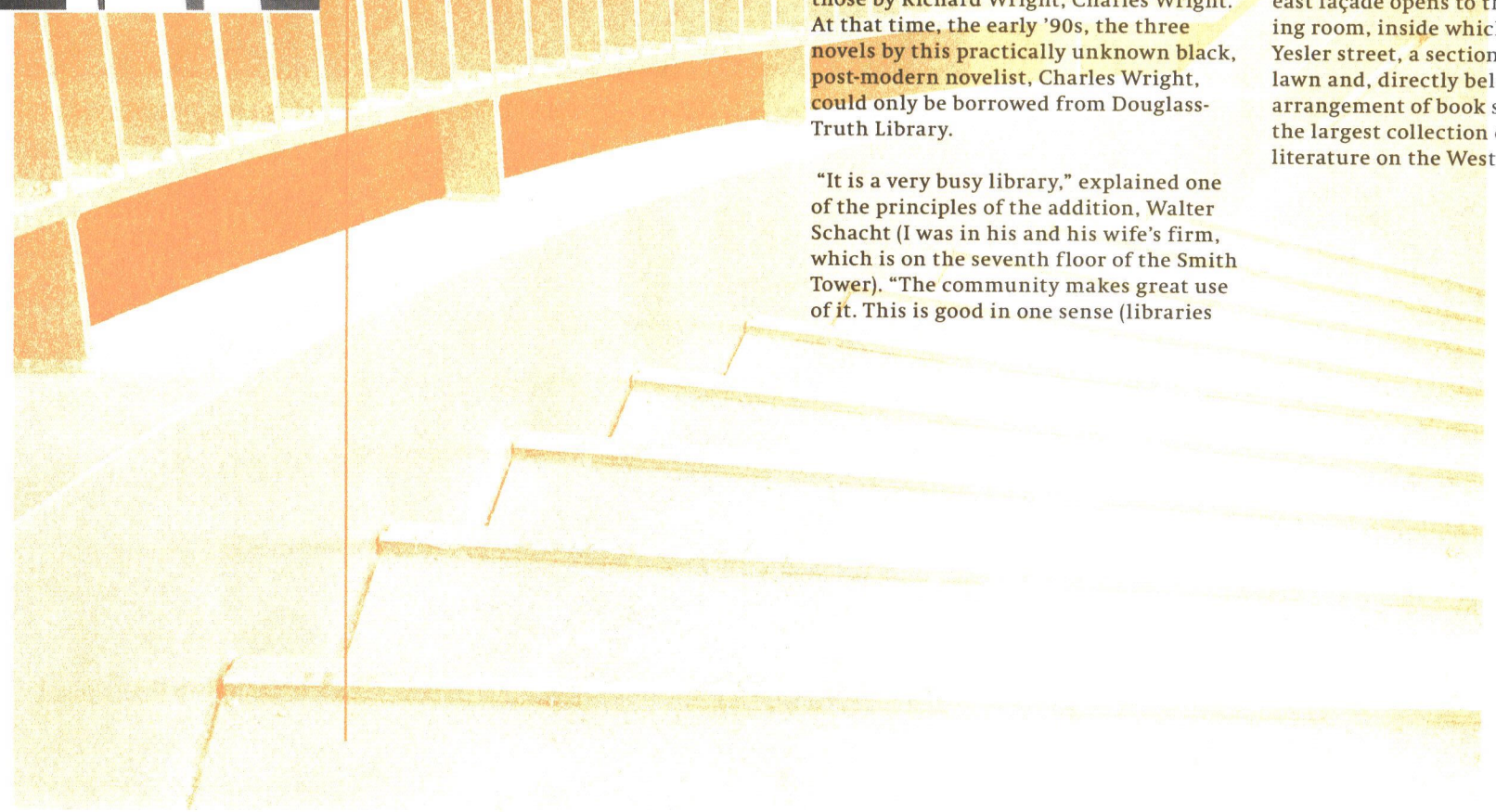
I learned all this, and came across the quoted passage—which is in *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright*, a literary study by the leading scholar in matters concerning the works and life of Wright, Michel Fabre—in the Douglass-Truth Library, whose West Reading Room contained the and documents in the state of Washington. As to how this particular library in Seattle's historic black neighborhood accumulated the impressive collection of novels, non-fiction and criticisms about and by black Americans, is a matter for another article. For now, I want point out that this collection has moved to the basement of the library's recently completed extension, which was designed by Schacht Aslani Architects in 2003, completed this summer, and now successfully expresses the dynamic energy of a neighborhood that has been, currently is, and will continue to be in a state of economic and cultural flux.

But to describe the collection's new location as a "basement" seems a bit unfair. A basement is where things are stored and forgotten. A basement is dank and dark and, in the situation of a horror movie, the last place one should go in the middle of the night. A kitchen is for food; a bedroom is for sleep; a basement is for ghosts. Douglass-Truth's below-grade addition is about the sun, glass and a design that receives and diffuses natural light into a space where one can, in peace, read, discover and note down passages like this: "It was Saturday night. The sky was starscaped, and homespun rib-tickling brotherly love had settled over the city"—the sentences are from a novel, *The Wig*, by an author whose books I discovered in 1991 shelved next to those by Richard Wright, Charles Wright. At that time, the early '90s, the three novels by this practically unknown black, post-modern novelist, Charles Wright, could only be borrowed from Douglass-Truth Library.

"It is a very busy library," explained one of the principles of the addition, Walter Schacht (I was in his and his wife's firm, which is on the seventh floor of the Smith Tower). "The community makes great use of it. This is good in one sense (libraries it's often very busy and there's not enough room for the kind of peace you need when reading. The addition will make this kind of peace possible. The light shall enter it in such a way that it will feel like a sanctuary." Schacht was correct about the busy-ness of Douglass-Truth; it often made reading difficult critical texts on writers like Baldwin, Toomer and Hurston even more difficult. The sanctuary will give the researcher, the lover of the largest collection of black literature in the Pacific Northwest, the necessary peace and light to make good progress.

The original body of the Douglass-Truth library (part Renaissance Revival and part Prairie Style) was designed by W. Marbury Somervell and Harlan Thomas and completed in 1914. Inside, oak bookshelves run beneath tall windows and above it all are stained-glass skylights. The addition, which nearly doubles the space of the primary volume (from 8,000 square feet to 15,000 square feet), has a skin of copper and, on its east side, a glass façade that breaks from and, at the same time, reflects the historic building.

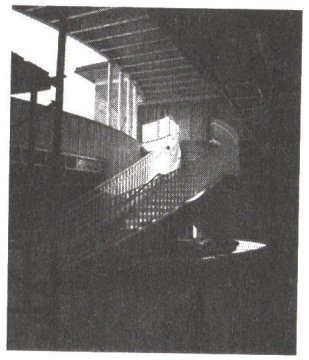
Inside the addition, curving (almost spiraling) with the glass wall that sweeps away from the old building, is a staircase that descends to the new adult reading room—a meeting room and computer room are stacked on the north side of the staircase. A glass door on the addition's east façade opens to the above-grade meeting room, inside which you can see busy Yesler street, a section of the library's east lawn and, directly below the lawn, the arrangement of book shelves that contains the largest collection of black American literature on the West Coast.

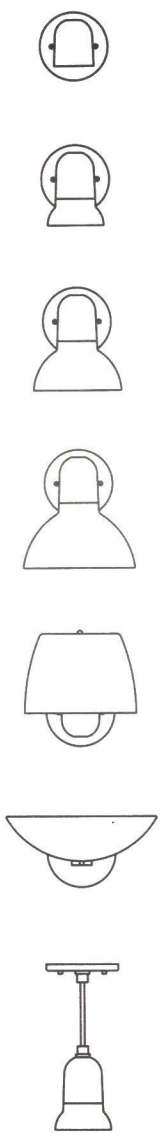


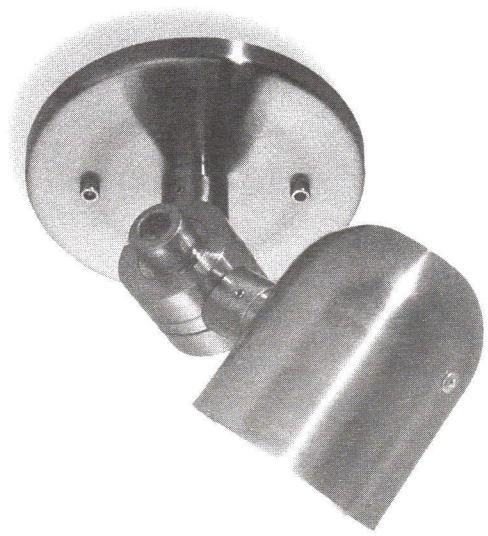
documents and works of art that preserve a vital part of the American experience.

Charles Tonderai Mudede is an associate editor for the Stranger. He was born in an Africans-only hospital in Que Que (now called Kwe Kwe), Rhodesia (now called Zimbabwe), in 1969—Kwe Kwe was, and might still be, an industrial town, much like Charles Dickens's Coketown. Mudede is also an adjunct professor at Pacific Lutheran University, a filmmaker, and culture critic whose work has appeared in the Village Voice, Sydney Morning Daily, and the New York Times, among others. Mudede reads Lolita at least three times a year.

Photos courtesy Schacht Aslani Architects







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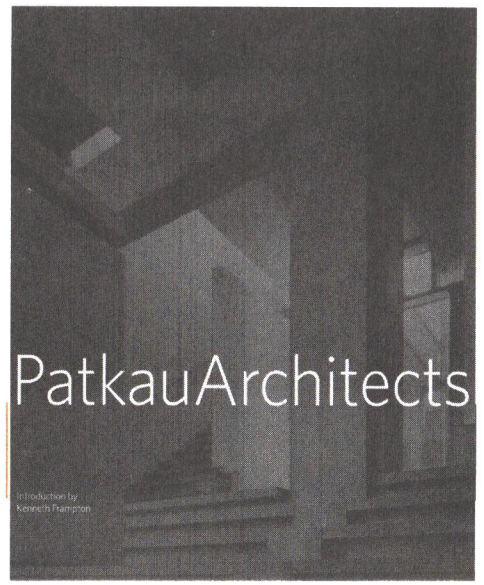
Patkau Architects 05

JM Cava

In olden times, that is before 1995, an architectural monograph set forth the work of an architect, whose personality was irrelevant, though possibly vaguely discernable through the collection of plans, sketches, models and photographs. Thus, generations of architects so engaged Lutyens, Le Corbusier, Loos and Lissitsky. But in 1995, the Koolhaas-Mau machine unleashed OMA's monograph, *S, M, L, XL,* upon the world, cashing in on a celebrity-focused culture and redefining "starchitect" in a way that made Howard Roark look like a mousy introvert.



Possibly the most egocentric production in architectural history, this 1,300-page extravaganza presented—besides buildings and projects—a personalized potpourri of "essays, manifestos, diaries, fairy tales, travelogues, [and] meditations on the contemporary city...."

If this hyperbolic self-referential doorstop is the kind of architectural monograph you crave, then steer clear of *Patkau Architects 05* (Monacelli Press, 2006), the first large-scale book documenting the major work of this magnificent Canadian firm. In this book it's the work and nothing but the work. No interviews, portraits, bios, musings or manifestos—only an introduction and list of collaborators bookend the handsome presentation of the architecture. Any office ideology is embedded in the work itself, available to anyone interested enough to look, but an intrinsic part of the architectural form.

Originally planned with more essays and interviews, the office decided to include only one essay—by the insightful and indefatigable Kenneth Frampton, who thankfully elucidates their architecture instead of obfuscating it, as many academic writers do. Brendan Behan famously compared critics to eunuchs in a harem: they know how it's done, they've seen it done, but they're unable to do it themselves. Frampton's commentary proves that his architectural training and practice, along with a reverence for what he calls "Poetics of Construction," distance him from this unfortunately accurate stereotype. It is refreshing to see an intellectual discuss the work from an architect's viewpoint, familiar with essential forces most critics ignore: politics, budget, schedule, structure and construction.

The Patkau office also appears to embrace Frampton's dictum, that an architecture of purpose and beauty engage three questions: topography, typology and tectonics. Topography includes not only the spatial relationship between earth plane and building, but landscape, ecology and respect for the planet. An interest now claimed by nearly every office, the Patkaus are one of the few that walk the talk. I once visited Portland's Chinese Garden with John Patkau and before we got through the front gate, he rattled off the names of a half dozen plants, pointing out specialized pruning techniques and their effects. With this kind of attention to landscape, the office works against a current trend of minimalist architectural fetish-objects easily photographed for publication, but disconnected with any physical place.

Aldo Van Eyck once suggested that architects focus less on what is different in our time and more on what remains the same. The work in this book is, in fact, less interested in the destruction and reinvention of typology (de rigueur for Mr. Koolhaas), than in reinterpreting types—both spatial and historic—according to time, place and use. [For an in-depth perspective on a recent Patkau project, see Trevor Boddy's article in this issue.]

As for the tectonic component, this architecture is among the most powerful and lyrical being built today. Flexible and imaginative, it has no signature style or approach, but adapts and explores the expressive potential of structure and construction, though never for its own sake. For example there is the great variety of idioms dealing with the complex grammar of, and dialogue between, structure and skin. The office is also obsessed with exploiting the sectional possibilities of a scheme, an underutilized device throughout modern architecture, and this inquiry into Section (the Newton library has no fewer than seven distinct cross sections) produces a kind of exuberant yet orderly spatial complexity. Important study models of the buildings, produced after construction is complete, are made in section, for this is where the narrative resides. Patricia Patkau once assigned her students at UBC a good-sized building program on a site only about ten feet wide, forcing the studio to explore the building primarily with section.

Not unexpectedly, Frampton's tour of the Patkau oeuvre centers on such tectonic ideas, in both meanings of the term; structural/constructional components defining space and articulating form, and stereotomic mass-form, or "earthworks," contrasted with lightweight "tectonic" frameworks, represented in this work primarily as roofs. To the veteran Frampton reader this is familiar territory, but following the text (Frampton visited nearly every building before writing the essay), one is rewarded with information, insight and understanding.

We live in a culture that commodifies everything, architecture included. Styles are "branded," designers jockey for celebrity status, and buildings are ultimately either fashion or finance. In this environment, the Patkau office has managed to beat the odds; while remaining personally modest, they produce vibrantly contemporary buildings with an unsentimental awareness of precedent and tradition. Kenneth Frampton once summarized current architectural production by stating, "the task of our time is to combine vitality with calm." The work found in this book achieves just that.

JM Cava is an architect in Portland. He is a teacher, writer, and designer of buildings and gardens.

Goeden Dag Friends of ARCADE:

Zutphen, The Netherlands
July 15, 2006

This email is coming to you today from the quaint Dutch city of Zutphen. I have brought my wife and three boys here on a six-week cultural pilgrimage to get in touch with our family heritage. With a name like van der Veen (pronounced fan de fean), go figure.

Zutphen is a postcard-perfect town of 30,000, two hours east of Amsterdam in the flat cow-laden farmlands for which The Netherlands is known. My mother grew up in this city that dates back to Roman times. She actually met my father on a bridge a block from where we are renting a brownstone. No, he wasn't trying to jump off. He was actually trying to pick up girls while in the Dutch Army. My father dragged the family to America several years later, but that's another story.

When we came here, I promised my family that I wouldn't absorb myself with architecture and design. Even so, this very Dutchy city is teaching me several urban lessons that we Seattleites can learn from:

1. Plan/design everything, every square meter (oh, don't I sound Euro?) of your city. Don't leave anything to "what the market wants" until the market proves it can create very cool urban places. As is typical in Holland, Zutphen has VERY strong central planning (your average American developer would probably consider it downright suffocating). I have yet to see a corner of this city that wasn't thought out, purposeful and clearly articulated.

2. Taxes actually pay for things...like great cities. 40% tax brackets pay for (among other things) tree-lined roads and highways, trains and light rail, brick streets, cool outdoor furniture, modern metro stops, great plazas, bike lanes, more bike lanes, even more bike lanes. You get my drift.

3. The Dutch have a different brick for everything! It is amazing the rich urban mosaic that can be created by using brick so intelligently. Yesterday I went around counting how many different bricks were used in typical street configurations around the neighborhood. I counted up to ten different patterns on some streets signifying distinct zones such as traffic lanes, parking strips, bike lanes, sidewalks, intersections, etc. It helps to create a wonderful pedestrian and bicycle scale. I guess in a land as flat as a drafting table, when you don't have a view to look out to, you need a great foot-scape to look down at.

4. In Holland biking is a life style, not a hobby. And if you plan to come here and bike, please don't think you are going to impress anyone with your expensive biker friend who has visited Washington asked me why Seattleites need special tight clothing to ride bikes...

5. A town like Zutphen has an evolving beauty, which is often in the details and tactile experiences rather than in singular gestures. American cities with their rigid street grids give it all to you in one big swoop. These towns with their twisted streets and small scales are experienced in a constantly evolving manner that not only requires patience and time, but also invites it. We are so used to instantaneous imagery of cities and buildings in our automobiles that Americans need a decompression time to really comprehend European townscapes.

6. Fat? What fat? Just eat it!!!!

7. Related to item 5, designers can make very great places to live with a city full of background buildings. Conformity in Holland isn't a bad thing. Not every house or building has to scream individuality. People don't seem to care as much here that they are part of a larger context than their individual dwelling unit. The Dutch seem comfortable that they live in a brick house next to a brick house next to a brick house....

8. Good Cheese!

9. My God, we need to reduce our energy usage. The Dutch make us look like energy savages, pigs, hill-billies, Neanderthals, Texans, whatever the meanest title I can come up with. I am stunned to see that Europeans have been able to survive the last 20 years without American SUV's, and they have snow and hills too!!!!

In housing, they have somehow found a way to live with shared bathrooms, small kitchens, adjoining side-yards, bedrooms sized for beds, neighbors who live so close by you have to talk to them, and in general, homes you don't need maps to find your way around in.

Now, I know there are gong to be some die-hard American ARCADErs reading this article thinking that I am way too biased towards this flat, liberal little cow country. To be fair, I have put a list together of what the Dutch can learn from America:

1. Poop Scoop Law. Come on Euro-man, this is a public park...

2. Starbucks Coffee. I never thought I'd come to the place in my life where I would actually miss American coffee.

3. Cheap soft drinks. Two Euros for that?!?!?

4. Ice. Those two Euros paid for a small, WARM soft drink...

5. Five weeks vacation for every worker? Ridiculous! What can you do in five weeks that you can't in two?

6. Dutch, Holland, Nederland, the Netherlands?
Make up your freakin' mind!

Got to run for now to take my 80-year-old aunt out for dinner. Though the rain is pouring outside, she insists we ride our bikes instead of drive! And we say Europeans are wimps!

Tot Ziens from Zutphen,

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Top 10 Buildings in My Hometown That I'm (Not) Ashamed to Love

Jane Radke Slade

Sometimes I get to feeling a little sheepish at the ARCADE editorial meetings. I nod and murmur and pretend to be deeply moved by this, or deeply offended by that. After 25 years, I think it's time the little people spoke up. And since I'm the only little people around, while everyone else is busy getting their professional knickers in a twist about some design controversy or another, I'm going to tell you what I like. Damn the consequences to my design cred.

photos: Michael Burns

10. 700 Broadway

It's a question of whether your glass is half-full or half-empty as regards this north Broadway parcel. I saw balconies, fountains and brick, and while my cup didn't exactly runneth over, I must admit to being a little charmed. [Note to Editor of ARCADE: I dare you to get out your red editing pencil! I will not be intimidated! I stand charmed!]

9. Tully's

(Formerly the Rainier Brewery)
Apply a fresh coat of garish paint to your concrete structures and the unenlightened public, including me, will swoon.

8. Seattle Tower

If my tax accountant didn't have an office in here, I would roll around naked on its marble floor, flopping up the marble staircase like a pink salmon on a luxury fish ladder.

7. Lowell Elementary School

It's all old brick and right-up-on-the-sidewalk in the middle of the city, just like the elementary school on Sesame Street. Wide hallways, stairs you can take two at a time... Thank goodness it's no longer on the Seattle Public Schools closure list. If they scrapped it, somebody would go and make a bundle of money on crappy faux-Craftsman townhouses in ridiculously garish colors.

6. Veer Lofts

Not yet built, but according to the extensive advertorial in *Seattle Metropolitan*, Veer Lofts is the condo building in South Lake Union that's targeted to my demographic. I feel so...*understood*.

5. All Brightly-Colored Ersatz-Craftsman Row Houses

See "Tully's" above regarding paint. Low income housing never looked so inviting.

4. EMP

I actually hate this building, garish colors and all, but I'm ashamed to hate it because every Tom, Dick and Harry hates the EMP building. So I'm practicing appreciating it. For example, I appreciate the smooth, shiny metallic blob-with-a-door where tour groups enter the museum. Nowhere else will you find such a nice shiny blob-with-a-door.

3. IKEA Renton

If you're going to do a big box, do a Big Box. So deliciously anonymous do I feel in this immense hangar, I check my children at the door and abandon all my food principles in the cafeteria, sopping up lingonberry sauce with mystery-meat meatballs and washing it all down with Coke.

2. Harborview Medical Center

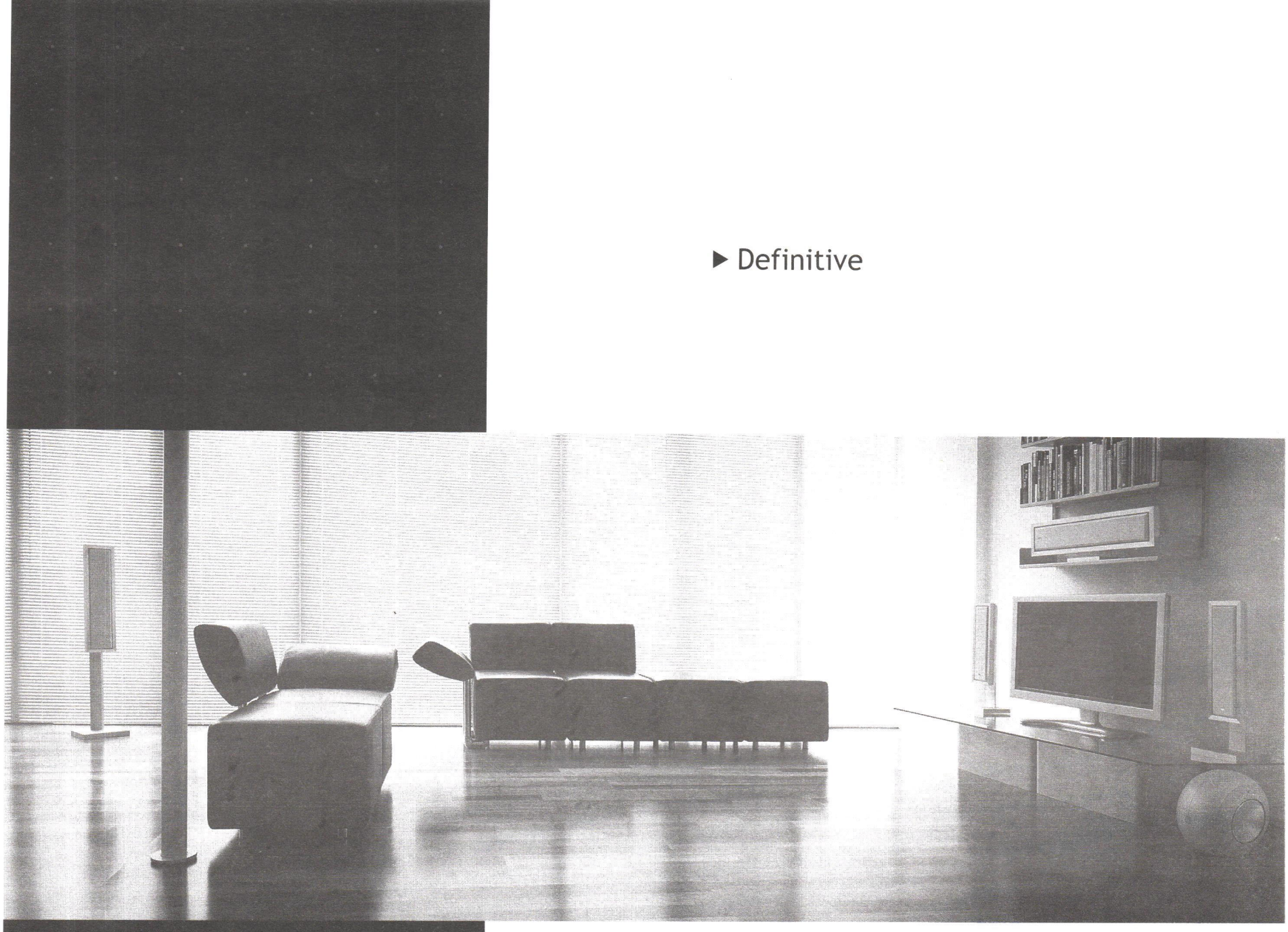
This building says to me: the only plastic surgery going on in here is the emergency kind. When the shit hits the fan, I don't want to ease into the graceful round drive at Swedish. No way. I want to be airlifted to Harborview.

And the #1 Seattle Building I'm *Not* Ashamed to Love...Maison Jiselle

Every time I drive by this magenta-wine painted brick apartment building at 14th & Fir, with its blooming courtyard and bubble-umbrella awnings, I slow down and grin. No other building in Seattle makes me grin every time I see it. (Except maybe my massage therapist's office....) When owners Eric and Robin Arcio bought the building, the first thing they did was plant a rose-covered trellis in the courtyard. Residents had told them the previous landlord was forever promising a rose garden. Over the next two years they redid all 15 tiny one-bedroom apartments, each in its own materials scheme, and got to work on all the little touches that compel tourists to take pictures of old ladies perched in the old residential courtyards of Paris and Rome. Now the building is filled mostly with professionals and their assorted canines. There is a resident elderly gal that the others get to take turns fussing over. I'm not sure if she's part of the design scheme or not, but I wouldn't be surprised.

There you have it. Take your name-architect public buildings. Bicker over your 700 Broadways. What we really want is a climbing rose. Let's start a raspberry revolution in this neutral town. Pink awnings for everyone!

Jane Radke Slade is a Seattle humorist who reveals in each issue of ARCADE her deep ignorance of all things design.



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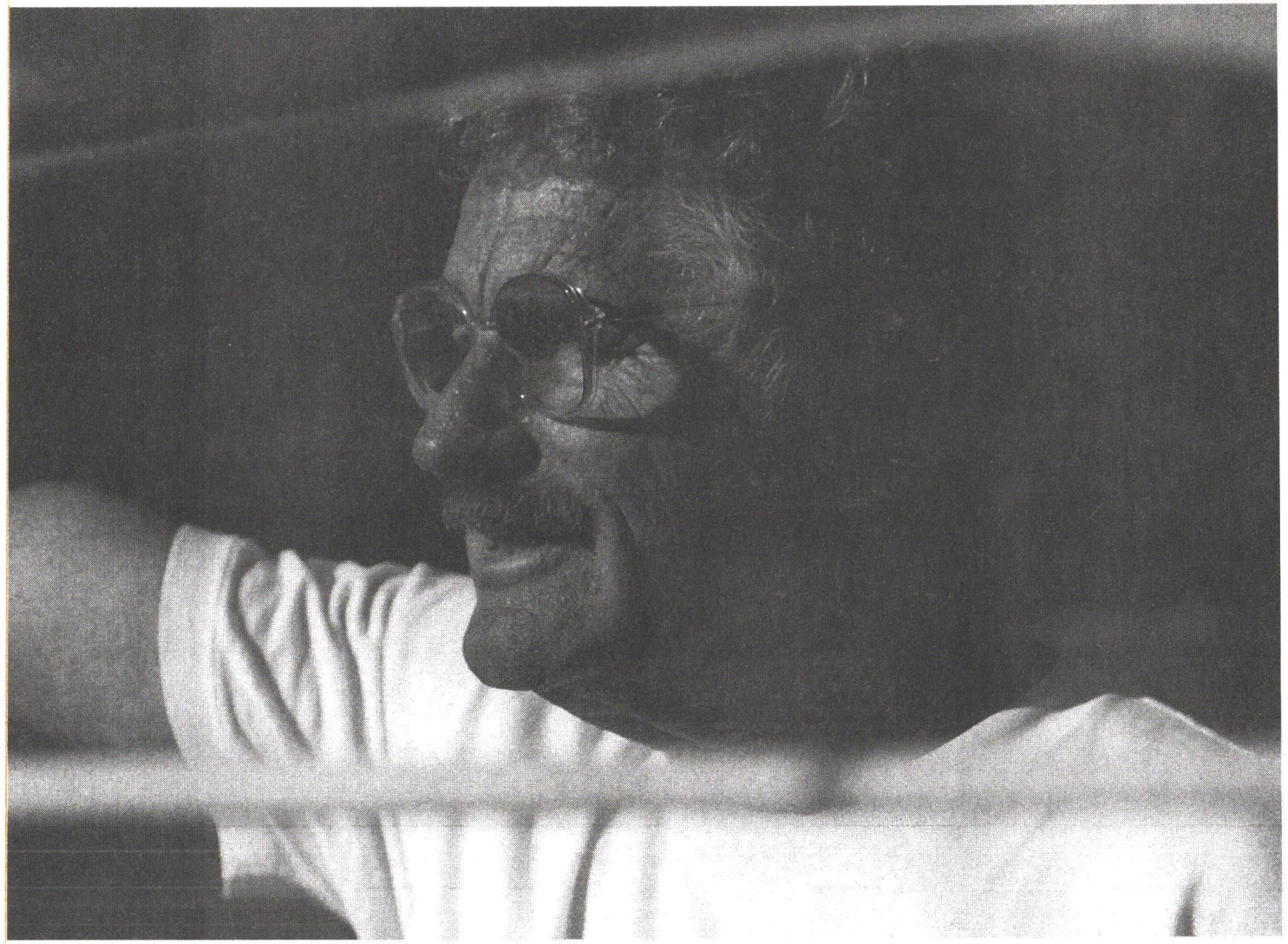
In Memoriam

Neil Twelker, PhD, Civil Engineer
1921 – 2006

Neil will be remembered as a marvelous storyteller with a fascinating mind who believed that engineering was a calling, not a business, and that the work was about people and their needs, not formulas and structures. Shortly before he passed away, he told his wife, Alice,

"The problem with me is I don't want to go because I want to know what's going to happen next."



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